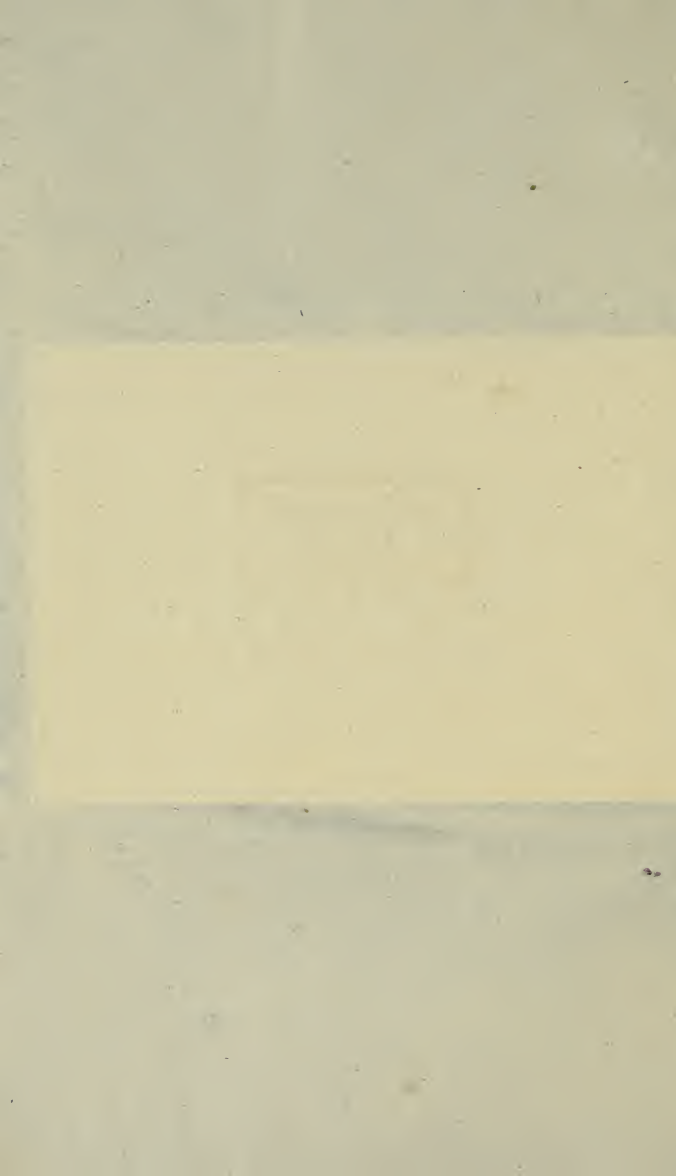


*Doctor Batty,
Fairlight.*

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THE

CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE LATE

JOHN WILKES,

WITH HIS FRIENDS,

PRINTED FROM THE

ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS,

IN WHICH ARE INTRODUCED

MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE,

BY JOHN ALMON.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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1894-1895

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MEMOIRS
AND
CORRESPONDENCE
OF
JOHN WILKES, Esq.

NOTES ON THE POEMS OF CHURCHILL.

EXTRACT FROM CHURCHILL'S WILL,
DATED NOVEMBER 5, 1764.

‘ I DESIRE my dear friend, JOHN
‘ WILKES, Esq. to collect and publish
‘ my Works; with the remarks and ex-
‘ planations he has prepared, and any
‘ others he thinks proper to make.’

Proved at London, the 22d of
November, 1764.

DUELIST.

‘ And Innocence with Holland sleeps.’

Book I.

THE observation of Lucius, in the party poem of Cato, is here most happily exemplified :

Sweet are the slumbers of the virtuous man !

Careless infancy does not close the eyelid more easily, nor in more full peace and serenity, than this virtuous lord.

This is the first time we meet with the name of Holland in the poet’s works. He had very duly and regularly paid his compliments to Mr. Fox ; and now we see that he does not quit his old acquaintance at

the door of the house of lords. He boldly ventures in ; but, alas ! he has the mortification of finding that *fair polished front*, and *modest brow*, hid from his wishing eyes by an encircling coronet. The same part of discernment, and attention to reward all true merit, so remarkable in the reign of George III., which advanced the immaculate Sandwich to be secretary of state, and the brave Talbot to be steward of the household, raised Mr. Fox to the peerage. Two particulars ought to be noted in the close of his life. The first respects the post of paymaster of the forces, which he held during all the last war *. Very soon after the peace was signed, sir John Philipps (member for Pembrokeshire) moved the house of commons, “ that a committee be appointed to take into consideration the several estimates and

* The war of 1756, usually called the Seven Years' war.

accounts, presented to the house, either in the present or in any former session of parliament, which relate to the application or expenditure of the *public money* since the commencement of the late war." The house of commons came to this resolution on the 22d of February, 1763. On the 16th of April following Mr. Fox was created lord Holland, and in a few days after retired to France.

The other circumstance to which I alluded, is no less remarkable. That public odium which had long pursued his name, and became inseparable from it, grew at length to such a height, that Mr. —— deserted him. In almost every busy scene of life he had been Mr. F.'s chief agent; and had been admitted to such a share of the public pl——r, that he had himself amassed a ministerial fortune. In private he amused his friends with a variety of instances, in which their successful frauds

had been so artfully carried on, that they had remained even unsuspected. In public, a regard for his own security kept Mr. —— silent; and the master was not impeached, because in cases of public justice no indemnity can be given to an accomplice, as in the less atrocious instances of private felony.

[At the end of the above note, Mr. Wilkes writes to his friend, to whom he sends it, the following words:]

‘ The above is a small specimen of the
‘ mildness of the notes, which are de-
‘ signed to correct the acrimony of the
‘ text. You shall soon have several
‘ more.’

[Mr. Wilkes’s MS. of the preceding note, the Editor has left in the hands of the Publisher.]

NIGHT.

THE poem of Night was written in vindication of himself and Mr. Robert Lloyd, against the censures of some false friends, who affected to pay the highest compliments to their genius, but were most industrious in seizing every opportunity of condemning their conduct in private life. These *prudent* persons found a malicious pleasure in propagating the story of every unguarded hour, and in gratifying that rage after the little anecdotes of admired authors upon which small wits subsist. Such a proceeding ought, however, in all fairness, to be considered only as the low gossiping of the literary world, just as scandal amuses the circle of the gay and polite. The curiosity of the town was fed by these people from time to time ; and every dull

lecturer within the bills of mortality comforted himself that he did not keep such hours as Mr. Churchill and Mr. Lloyd.

The poet does not blush to own, that he often passed the night after the manner of the first men of antiquity. They knew how to redeem the fleeting hours from 'Death's half-brother,' and fellow-tyrant, 'Sleep.' They lamented the shortness and uncertainty of human life; but both only served to give a keener relish to their pleasures, and as the truest arguments not to let any portion of it pass unenjoyed.

The two English poets were worthy of the converse of the most genial wits of Rome and Greece. They may perhaps have been censured by some wondrous grave moderns, but in a more classic age their happy sallies would not have ill become the *noctes Atticæ*.

‘ Might the whole world be plac’d within my span,
I would not be that *thing*, a *prudent* man.’

SWIFT very well observes, ‘ There is no
‘ talent so useful towards rising in the
‘ world, or which puts men more out of
‘ the reach of fortune, than that quality
‘ generally possessed by the dullest sort
‘ of people, and is in common speech
‘ called *discretion* ; a species of lower *pru-*
‘ *dence*, by the assistance of which, peo-
‘ ple of the meanest intellectuals, without
‘ any other qualification, pass through
‘ the world in great tranquillity, and with
‘ universal good treatment, neither giving
‘ nor taking offence.’

Essay on the Fates of Clergymen.

‘ But if, in searching round the world, we find
Some gen’rous youth, the friend of all mankind,—
Whose anger, like the bolt of Jove, is sped
In terrors only at the guilty head ;
Whose mercies, like Heav’n’s dew, refreshing fall
In gen’ral love and charity to all ;—
Pleas’d we behold such worth on any throne ;
And, doubly pleas’d, we find it on our own.’

THIS is undoubtedly the handsomest compliment that has been paid to his present majesty. It was written in honour of a young king, very early in his reign. The English *at that time* entertained the fondest hopes of being happy under the government of a prince who was born in their country, and who, it was natural to imagine, would have a predilection for them : but in a few months every Englishman of any great talents or consideration was disgraced, Mr. Legge, the dukes of

Newcastle and Devonshire, &c. Lord Bute established his omnipotence through every department of the state.

G O T H A M.

‘ November : who at once, to grace our earth,
Saint Andrew boasts, and our Augusta’s birth.’

SAINT Andrew always means the patron of Scotland and Scotsmen. In the Tale of a Tub, Jack says, ‘ It was ordained, some
‘ few days before the Creation, that my
‘ *nose* and this very *post* should have a
‘ rencounter; and therefore Nature thought
‘ fit to send us both into the world in the
‘ same age, and to make us fellow-
‘ citizens.’

Sect. II.

* October: who the cause of freedom join'd,
And gave a second George to bless mankind.'

Book I.

THIS excellent prince on many occasions ventured his life in the cause of liberty. His distinguished bravery at the battles of Oudenard and Dettingen, was frequently the subject of the unsuspected praise of our inveterate enemies, the French. He was always a steady friend to the liberties of mankind; and, like the former princes of his house and of the Nassau line, kept a watchful eye over the Bourbons, well knowing their rooted enmity to our religion and government, and their long-meditated schemes for grasping at universal monarchy. He often checked the restless ambition of France in its mad career, by the most firm, wise, and successful measures. At his death he left us in possession of the capitals of the French in Asia and

America, and of many other important conquests there, as well as in Europe and Africa; the greatest part of which we lost soon after by the peace of Paris, which proved more ruinous to England than all the swords of all our enemies.

It is justice to the memory of the late king to declare, that he no less endeavoured to make his people free and happy at home, than to carry the glory of the British arms to the highest pitch every where abroad. During his reign the laws were respected and obeyed. Liberty and Justice sat with him on the throne. The execution of earl Ferrers impressed all foreign nations with the greatest idea of the sacredness of our laws, and the protection they gave to the meanest subject under a firm and mild sovereign. It was likewise believed, that if the court-martial on lord George Sackville had given the sentence which all Europe expected, the justice of

his late majesty would have ordered it to be carried into execution.

The poet knew, and deeply felt, the obligation which a nation owes to such a prince. He pays it, when he cannot lie under the suspicion of flattery ; at a time when it was seen, that no man could so effectually make his court as by vilifying the memory of our late sovereign, and tearing the laurels from his tomb. In this task numberless mercenaries were employed ; but it is a sufficient answer to a legion of them, that in the *first* address of the house of lords to the present king, it is observed that his majesty's *predecessor*, through his whole reign, never once suffered the rights of any one of his subjects to be violated.

I hope to be excused, when I add, that the praise which the late king now receives is a tribute of public, not of private, gratitude. It comes from the meanest of

his subjects ; who looks back with rapture on the first thirty years of his life, because they were passed in his native country, in the land of liberty, when the prince on the throne loved and cherished it. The poet is removed from the melancholy scenes which have followed. His tears no longer flow for his dear country—his country weeps for him. I will only add, in the words of Cicero :

‘ Nosque malo solatio, nonnullo tamen,
‘ consolamur, quòd ipsius vicem minimè
‘ dolemus : immò, Herculè, quia sic
‘ amabat patriam, ut mihi aliquò deorum
‘ beneficio videatur ex ejus incendio esse
‘ ereptus.’

‘ Unhappy Stuart! Harshly though that name
Grates on my ear, I should have died with shame,
To see my king before his subjects stand,
And at their bar hold up his royal hand;
At their commands to hear the monarch plead,
By their decrees to see that monarch bleed.’

Book II.

SYDNEY and Milton have considered the death of Charles I. in a different light. In the memoirs of Algernon Sydney is a letter of the earl of Leicester to his son, in which is the following passage: ‘ It is said that a
‘ minister, who hath married a lady
‘ Laurence here at Chelsea, but now
‘ dwelling at Copenhagen, being there in
‘ company with you, said, *I think you*
‘ *were none of the late king’s judges, nor*
‘ *guilty of his death,* meaning our king.
‘ GUILTY! said you; *do you call that*
‘ GUILT? *Why, it was the justest and*
‘ *bravest action that ever was done in Eng-*

‘ *land, or any where else ; with other*
 ‘ *words to the same effect.*’

There is scarcely any thing in the Roman classics superior to the following passage of Milton :

‘ *Eam animi magnitudinem vobis, O*
 ‘ *cives ! injecit Deus, ut devictum armis*
 ‘ *vestris & dedititium regem *judicio inclyto**
 ‘ *judicare, & condemnatum punire, primi*
 ‘ *mortalium non dubitaretis. Post hoc*
 ‘ *facinus *tam illustre*, nihil humile aut an-*
 ‘ *gustum, nihil non magnum atque ex-*
 ‘ *celsum, & cogitare & facere debetis ;*
 ‘ *amore libertatis, religionis, justitiæ, ho-*
 ‘ *nestatis, patriæ denique charitate accen-*
 ‘ *sos, *tyrannum puniisse.**’

JOANNIS MILTONI, *Angli, pro Po-*
pulo Anglicano Defensio.

Cicero's words relative to the death of Cæsar, may in a good measure be applied to the second of Stuarts, Charles I. Milton, in another place, says that he was

‘ IP SO NERONE NERONIOR. Istius glo-
‘ riosissimi facti conscientia, omnes boni,
‘ quantum in ipsis fuit, Cæsarem occide-
‘ runt. Aliis consilium, aliis animus, alijs
‘ occasio defuit: voluntas nemini.’

CIC. Phil. II. c. 11, 12.

It was the favourite maxim of Brutus, that those who live in defiance of the laws, and cannot be brought to a trial, ought to be taken off without a trial. He therefore first planned, executed, and justified the death of Cæsar. The conduct of the English nation with regard to Charles I. is still clearer. His death can never be pretended to be an *assassination*. Our genius shudders at a practice, too frequent among our polite neighbours. The king had a legal, solemn trial; attended with all the fairness, and even candour, which the circumstances of a people still in arms for their liberties could permit.

The maxim of Brutus which I mentioned, is strongly enforced by the poet in

the following spirited lines, now before me, in his own MS.

‘ Proud Buckingham, for law too mighty grown,
A patriot dagger prob’d, and from the throne
Sever’d its minion. In succeeding times,
May all those fav’rites who adopt his crimes,
Partake his fate ! May ev’ry Villiers feel
The keen deep searchings of a Felton’s steel !’

TOWARDS the conclusion of the third book of Gotham, the poet seriously exclaims,

‘ to prevent
The course of Justice from her fair intent,
In vain my nearest, dearest friend shall plead,
In vain my mother kneel ; my soul may bleed,
But must not change. When Justice draws the
 dart,
Tho’ it is doom’d to pierce a *Fav’rite’s* heart,
’Tis mine to give it force, to give it aim ;
I know it duty, and I feel it fame.’

Lord Bute was called the king's *friend*; and he disposed of all the favours of the crown in a more absolute manner than any *favourite* had ever done before.

CONFERENCE.

THE following passage in the Conference can scarcely be mistaken :

‘ But when in after-times, (be far remov’d
That day!) our monarch, *glorious* and *belov’d*,
Sleeps with his fathers ; should imperious Fate,
In vengeance, with fresh Stuarts curse our
state,’ &c.

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HOGARTH.

THE Scottish minister had been attacked in a variety of political papers. The

North Briton, in particular, waged open war with him. Some of the numbers had been ascribed to Mr. Wilkes; others to Mr. Churchill, and Mr. Lloyd. Mr. Hogarth had for several years lived on terms of friendship and intimacy with Mr. Wilkes. As the Buckinghamshire regiment of militia, which this gentleman had the honour of commanding, had been for some months at Winchester, guarding the French prisoners, the colonel was there on duty. A friend wrote to him, that Mr. Hogarth intended soon to publish a political print of the *Times*; in which Mr. Pitt, lord Temple, Mr. Churchill, and *himself*, were held out to the public as objects of ridicule.

Mr. Wilkes, on this notice, remonstrated by two of their common friends to Mr. Hogarth, that such a proceeding would not only be unfriendly in the highest degree, but extremely injudicious: for such a pencil ought to be universal and

moral, to speak to all ages and to all nations ; not to be dipt in the dirt of the faction of a day, of an insignificant part of the country, when it might command the admiration of the whole. An answer was sent, that neither Mr. Wilkes nor Mr. Churchill was attacked in the *Times*, though lord Temple and Mr. Pitt were, and that the print would soon appear. A second message, soon after, told Mr. Hogarth, that Mr. Wilkes would never think it worth his while to take notice of any reflections on himself ; but, when his friends were attacked, he found himself wounded in the most sensible part, and would, as well as he could, revenge their cause : adding, that if he thought the North Briton would insert what he should send, he would make an appeal to the public on the very Saturday following the publication of the print. The *Times* soon after appeared ; and on the Saturday following, N^o 17 of the North Briton. If Mr.

Wilkes did write that paper, he kept his word better with Mr. Hogarth than the painter had done with him.

When Mr. Wilkes was the second time brought from the Tower to Westminster-hall, Mr. Hogarth skulked behind, in a corner of the gallery of the court of common-pleas : and, while the lord-chief-justice Pratt, with the eloquence and courage of old Rome, was enforcing the great principles of Magna Charta and the English constitution, while every breast from his caught the holy flame of liberty ; the painter was employed in caricaturing the person of the man, while all the rest of his fellow-citizens were animated in his cause ; for they knew it to be their own cause, that of their country, and of its laws. It was declared to be so a few hours after, by the unanimous sentence of the judges of that court ; and they were all present.

The print of Mr. Wilkes was soon after published, *drawn from the life by William*

Hogarth. It must be allowed to be an excellent compound caricature, or a caricature of what Nature had already caricatured. I know but one short apology to be made for this gentleman, or, to speak more properly, for the *person* of Mr. Wilkes; it is, that he did not make himself, and that he never was solicitous about the *case* (as Shakspeare calls it), only so far as to keep it clean and in health. I never heard that he once hung over the glassy stream, like another Narcissus, admiring the image in it, nor that he ever stole an amorous look at his counterfeit in a side mirror. His form, such as it is, ought to give him no pain, while it is capable of giving so much pleasure to others. I believe he finds himself tolerably happy in the *clay* cottage to which he is *tenant for life*, because he has learned to keep it in pretty good order; while the share of health and animal spirits which Heaven has given him, should hold out. I can

scarcely imagine he will be one moment peevish about the outside of so precarious, so temporary a habitation; or will ever be brought to own, *Ingenium Galbæ malè habitat*:—*Monsieur est mal logé*.

GHOST.

‘The hero, who for brawn and face,’ &c.

Book I.

THIS and the following lines are a most happy description of the person, dress, and manners, of William Talbot, earl Talbot, who was at that time lord-steward of his majesty’s household. The poet in several passages alludes to a variety of private anecdotes, most of which are told in the following letter from Mr. Wilkes to the earl Temple on the fifth of October, 1762:

To Earl Temple.

“Red Lion at Bagshot, Tuesday, 10 at night.

“MY LORD,

“I HAD the honour of transmitting to your lordship, copies of seven letters which passed between lord Talbot and me. As the affair is now over, I enclose an original letter of colonel Berkeley *, with a copy of mine previous to it †, which fixed the particulars of our meeting, and therefore remained a secret, very sacredly kept by the four persons concerned.

“I came here at three this afternoon; and about five I was told that lord Talbot and colonel Berkeley were in the house. Lord Talbot had been here at one, and was gone again; leaving a message, however, that he would soon return. I had continued in the room where I was at my first coming, for fear of raising any suspicion. I sent a compliment to colonel Berkeley,

* Afterwards lord Bottetourt.

† These several enclosures the reader will find at the end of this letter.

and that I wished to see him. He was so obliging as to come to me directly. I told him that I supposed we were to sup together with lord Talbot, whom I was ready to attend, as became a private gentleman; and that he and Mr. Harris, as our seconds, would settle the business of the next morning, according to my letter to him from Winchester, and his answer. Berkeley said, that his lordship desired to finish the business immediately. I replied, that the appointment was to sup together that evening, and to fight in the morning; that, in consequence of such an arrangement, I had, like an idle man of pleasure, put off some business of real importance, which I meant to settle before I went to bed. I added, that I was come from Medmenham-abbey, where the jovial monks of St. Francis had kept me up till four in the morning; that the world would therefore conclude I was drunk, and form no favourable opinion of his lordship from a

duel at such a time ; that it more became us both to take a cool hour of the next morning, as early a one as was agreeable to lord Talbot. Berkeley said, that he had undertaken to bring us together ; and as we were now both at Bagshot, he would leave us to settle our own business. He then asked me, if I would go with him to lord Talbot ? I said I would, any moment he pleased. We went directly, with my adjutant, Mr. Harris.

“ I found lord Talbot in an agony of passion. He said that I had injured, that I had insulted him, that he was not used to be injured or insulted ; what did I mean ? Did I, or did I not, write the North Briton of August the 21st, which had affronted his honour ? He would know ; he insisted on a direct answer : here were his pistols. I replied, that he would soon use them ; that I desired to know by what right his lordship catechised me about a paper, which did not bear my name ; that I should

never resolve him that question, till he made out his right of putting it; and that if I could have entertained any other idea, I was too well-bred to have given his lordship and colonel Berkeley the trouble of coming to Bagshot. I observed, that I was a private English gentleman, perfectly free and independent, which I held to be a character of the highest dignity; that I obeyed with pleasure a gracious sovereign, but would never submit to the arbitrary dictates of a fellow-subject, a lord-steward of his household; my superior indeed in rank, fortune, and abilities, but my equal only in honour, courage, and liberty.

“ Lord Talbot then asked me, if I would fight him that evening? I said, that I preferred the next morning, as it had been settled before; and gave my reasons. His lordship replied, that he insisted on finishing the affair immediately. I told him, that I should very soon be ready; that I did not mean to quit him, but would ab-

solutely first settle some important business relative to the education of an only daughter, whom I tenderly loved ; that it would take up a very little time, and I would immediately settle the affair in any way he chose, for I had brought both sword and pistols. I rung the bell for pen, ink, and paper ; desiring his lordship to conceal his pistols, that they might not be seen by the waiter. He soon after became half-frantic ; and made use of a thousand indecent expressions, that I should be hanged, damned, &c. I said that I was not to be frightened, nor in the least affected by such violence ; that God had given me a firmness and spirit, equal to his lordship's or any man's ; that cool courage should always mark me, and that it would be soon seen how well-bottomed I was.

“After the waiter had brought pen, ink, and paper, I proposed that the door of the room might be locked, and not opened till our business was decided. Lord Talbot,

upon this proposition, became quite outrageous ; declared that this was mere butchery, and that I was a wretch who sought his life. I reminded him, that I came there on a point of honour, to give his lordship satisfaction ; that I mentioned the circumstance of locking the door, only to prevent all possibility of interruption ; and that I would in every circumstance be governed, not by the turbulence of the most violent temper I had ever seen, but by the calm determinations of our two seconds, to whom I implicitly submitted. Lord Talbot then asked me, if I would deny the paper. I answered, that I neither would own nor deny it : if I survived, I would afterwards declare ; not before. Soon after, he grew a little cooler ; and in a soothing tone of voice said, I have never, I believe, offended Mr. Wilkes ; why has he attacked me ? He must be sorry to see me unhappy. I asked, upon what grounds his lordship imputed the paper to me :

that Mr. Wilkes would justify any paper to which he had put his name, and would equally assert the privilege of not giving any answer whatever about a paper to which he had not; that this was my undoubted right, which I was ready to seal with my blood. He then said he admired me exceedingly, really loved me; but I was an unaccountable animal:—Such parts! but would I kill him, who had never offended me? &c. &c. &c.

“We had after this a good deal of conversation about the Buckinghamshire militia; and the day his lordship came to see us on Wycombe-heath, before I was colonel. He soon after flamed out again, and said to me, ‘You are a murderer, you want to kill me; but I am sure that I shall kill you, I know I shall, by God. If you will fight, if you kill me, I hope you will be hanged: I know you will.’ Berkeley and Harris were shocked. I asked, if I was first to be killed, and afterwards hanged;

that I knew his lordship fought me with the king's pardon in his pocket, and I fought him with a halter about my neck ; that I would fight him for all that, and if he fell, I should not tarry here a moment for the tender mercies of such a ministry, but would directly proceed to the next stage, where my valet-de-chambre waited for me, and from thence I would make the best of my way to France, for men of honour were sure of protection in that kingdom. He seemed much affected by this. He told me that I was an unbeliever, and wished to be killed. I could not help smiling at this : and observed that we did not meet at Bagshot to settle articles of faith, but points of honour ; that indeed I had no fear of dying, but I enjoyed life as much as any man in it ; that I was as little subject to be gloomy, or even peevish, as any Englishman whatever ; that I valued life, and the fair enjoyments of it, so much,

I would never quit it by my own consent, except on a call of honour.

“ I then wrote a letter to your lordship, respecting the education of miss Wilkes; and gave you my poor thanks for the steady friendship with which you have so many years honoured me. Colonel Berkeley took care of the letter, and I have since desired him to send it to Stowe; for the sentiments of the heart at such a moment are beyond all politics, and indeed every thing else but such virtue as lord Temple’s.

“ When I had sealed my letter, I told lord Talbot that I was entirely at his service: and I again desired that we might decide the affair in the room, because there could not be a possibility of interruption; but he was quite inexorable. He then asked me, how many times we should fire. I said, that I left to his choice; I had brought a flask of powder, and a bag of

bullets. Our seconds then charged the pistols which my lord had brought: they were large horse-pistols. It was agreed we should fire at the word of command, to be given by one of our seconds. They tossed up, and it fell to my adjutant to give the word. We then left the inn, and walked to a garden at some distance from the house. It was near seven, and the moon shone very bright. We stood about eight yards distant; and agreed not to turn round before we fired, but to continue facing each other. Harris gave the word. Both our fires were in very exact time, but neither took effect. I walked up immediately to lord Talbot, and told him that I now avowed the paper. His lordship paid me the highest encomiums on my courage, and said he would declare every where that I was the noblest fellow God had ever made. He then desired, that we might now be good friends, and

retire to the inn to drink a bottle of claret together ; which we did with great good humour, and much laugh. Lord Talbot afterwards went to Windsor ; Berkeley and Harris to Winchester ; and I continue here till to-morrow morning, waiting the return of my valet-de-chambre, to whom I have sent a messenger. Berkeley told me, that he was grieved for lord Talbot's passion, and admired my courage and coolness beyond his farthest idea ; that was his expression.

“ I have a million of other particulars to relate ; but I blush already at the length of this letter.

“ Your lordship will soon see colonel Berkeley ; and I hope in a very few days to pay my devoirs at Stowe. I intend to be at Aylesbury quarter-sessions by Thursday dinner.

“ My most respectful compliments always attend lady Temple.

“ I am ever,
my dear lord,
your lordship’s very devoted,
and obedient humble servant,
JOHN WILKES.” *

* When this letter was first published, which was in the Political Register, lord Talbot supposed that lord Temple had furnished the editor of that work with the copy of it; and very abruptly charged lord Temple with it, as a fact, in the house of lords—not publicly, but privately. The rude manner in which lord Talbot spoke, prevented lord Temple giving an answer. Upon which lord Talbot declared that he expected *immediate* satisfaction. Lord Temple went out of the house, and beckoned lord Gower after him. Lord Talbot followed, and brought lord Pomfret. They were in the prince’s chamber. Lord Temple’s sword was out; when lord Montfort, coming through, stepped into the house, and informed the house of what was going on: upon which the four lords were instantly or-

[The following are the letters alluded to
above, in page 29.]

To Colonel Wilkes.

“ SIR,

“ As I have received no answer to a letter I wrote to you on the 25th August ; and find, by sending to your house in town, that I can have no immediate opportunity of seeing you ; I am forced again by letter to ask if you avow or disclaim being the author of the paper entitled the North Briton, of the 21st of August.

“ TALBOT.”

“ Bolton-street, Sept. 10, 1762.”

dered into the house, and obliged to pledge their honours the affair should go no farther.

Mr. Wilkes furnished the editor of the Political Register with the letter. Lord Temple had no concern in it. EDITOR.

To Earl Talbot.

“ Great George-street, Friday Sept. 10, 1762.

“ MY LORD,

“ I BEG your lordship to do me the justice to believe, that I never yet received the letter to me at Winchester, which Mr. Secker tells me was sent there a fortnight ago. I have just now the honour of your lordship's by that gentleman. Your lordship asks, if I avow or disclaim being author of the paper entitled the North Briton, of the 21st of August. My answer is, that I must first insist on knowing your lordship's right to catechise me about an anonymous paper. If your lordship is not satisfied with this, I shall ever be ready to give your lordship any other satisfaction becoming me as a gentleman.

“ I am,

my lord,

your lordship's most obedient
humble servant,

JOHN WILKES.”

To Earl Talbot.

“ Winchester, Sept. 14, 1762.

“ MY LORD,

“ I LEFT Winchester with lord Effingham’s* leave on the 2d of August, and did not return to this city till the 12th of this month. My drum-major brought me your lordship’s letter yesterday. I now return it with the seal unbroke, as the clearest demonstration that I never have read the contents of it. I suppose they are the same with the letter I had the honour of receiving by Mr. Secker.

“ I am,

my lord,

your lordship’s most obedient
humble servant,

JOHN WILKES.”

* Commander of the troops at Winchester.

To Colonel Wilkes.

“ SIR,

“ I SUPPOSE you have by this time found the letter I wrote directed to you at Winchester; and that it hath acquainted you why I addressed myself to Mr. Wilkes, to enquire if the North Briton of the 21st of August was written by him. I well know, every gentleman who contributes to support periodical papers by his pen, is not answerable for all the papers that appear under the title of that which he assists; but I cannot conceive that any man should refuse to assure a person, who hath been the object of the wit of any paper, that he was not the author of a paper he did not write. Every man's sense of honour ought to direct his conduct; if you prefer a personal engagement to the denying being the author of a paper that hath been so free with my name, I, who am publicly affronted by that paper, cannot in honour avoid requiring the satisfaction you seem

most desirous to give. Be pleased to write or send to me as soon as you have determined what part you will act. I shall be in London Thursday and Friday next, and this day sevensnight; after which I shall not be in London till Thursday the 23d.

“ I am,

Sir,

your humble servant,

TALBOT.”

“ Bolton-street, Sept. 12, 1762.”

To Earl Talbot.

“ Winchester, Sept. 16, 1762.

“ MY LORD,

“ I HAD not till yesterday the honour of your lordship’s letter of the 12th, and embrace this earliest opportunity of acknowledging it.

“ Your lordship has not yet, in my poor idea, ascertained the right you claim of in-

terrogating me about the paper of the 21st of August; and I will know the very good authority on which I am thus questioned, before I will return any answer whatever.

“Your lordship desires me to write or send to you as soon as I have determined what part I shall act. I intended my first letter should have made that sufficiently clear.

“I am,
my lord,
your lordship’s very humble servant,
JOHN WILKES.”

To Colonel Wilkes.

“SIR,

“I HAVE this instant yours of the 16th. It is your own declaration before men of truth and honour, that you occasionally assisted the paper called the North Briton with your pen: that is the foundation of my interro-

gating you about the North Briton of the 21st of August:— and whatever may be your idea, mine is, that when a gentleman owns himself an occasional author of an anonymous satirical paper, any person by name ridiculed in such an hebdomadal performance hath a right to ask the occasional avowed writer, if he was the author of the offending paper.

“ You may now, Sir, answer me or not. I have offered to put myself upon that footing with you, that became a man who hath spirit, and is influenced by honour:— if you do not deny the paper, I must and will conclude you wrote it.

“ Your humble servant,

TALBOT.”

“ Bolton-street, Sept. 16, 1762.”

To Earl Talbot.

“ Winchester, Sept. 21, 1762.

“ MY LORD,

“ SUNDAY’S post brought me your lordship’s of the 17th ; and by the return of it this waits on your lordship.

“ You are pleased to say, that it is my own declaration before men of truth and honour, that I occasionally assisted the paper called the North Briton. I wish your lordship had been more explicit, and had mentioned the name of any one gentleman before whom I made that declaration. Was it made in public ? or was it in private conversation ? Still I have the misfortune of not yet seeing your lordship’s right of putting the question to me about the paper of the 21st of August : and till I do, I will never resolve your lordship on that head ; though I would any friend in the world who had the curiosity of asking me, if it was in a civil manner.

“ Your lordship says, that if I do not deny the paper, you must and will conclude I wrote it. Your lordship has my free consent to make any conclusions you think proper, whether they are well or ill grounded ; and I feel the most perfect indifference about what they are, or the consequences of them.

“ I intend at present to make a tour on Thursday to the Isle of Wight. I shall return to this city the beginning of the next week.

“ I am,

my lord,

your lordship's most humble servant,

JOHN WILKES.”

[The following extract from the North Briton of the 21st of August 1762, formed the subject of earl Talbot's complaint in the above affair, as alluded to in his lordship's letter, page 41.]

“ A politeness equal to that of lord Talbot's—*horse*, ought not to pass unnoticed. At the coronation he paid a new, and, for a horse, singular respect for his sovereign. I appeal to the applauding multitudes; who were so charmed, as to forget every rule of decency, and to clap even in the royal presence; whether *his* or his lord's dexterity on that day did not surpass any courtier's. Caligula's horse had not half the merit. We remember how nobly *he* was provided for. What the exact proportion of merit between his lordship and his horse, and how far the pension* should be divided between them, I will not take

* Lord Talbot had a pension.

upon me to determine. I leave this knotty point to be decided by the earl of Eglington, because Mr. John Hurric, alias Home (for so it is printed in the sweet nosegay of Scottish thistles), tells the world (volume II. page 230) that he is

A friend of princes, poets, wits ;
A judge infallible of TITS.

“ In my private opinion, however, the merit of *both* was very great, and neither ought to pass unnoticed. The impartial and inimitable pen of Cervantes has made Rosinante immortal, as well as don Quixote. Lord Talbot's horse, like the great planet in Milton, ‘ danced about in various rounds his wandering course.’ At different times he was progressive, retrograde, or standing still. The progressive motion, I should rather incline to think the merit of the horse; the retrograde motion, the merit of the lord. Some of the regulations of the courtiers themselves for that day, had

long been settled by former lord-stewards. It was reserved for lord Talbot to settle an etiquette for their *horses*."

[Copy of Mr. Wilkes's letter to colonel Berkeley, and colonel Berkeley's answer, fixing the meeting at Bagshot between lord Talbot and Mr. Wilkes; mentioned also at the beginning of Mr Wilkes's letter to lord Temple, page 29, above :]

" Winchester, Sept. 30, 1762.

" SIR,

" LORD TALBOT, by your message, has at last brought this most important question to the precise point where my first answer to his lordship fixed it, if he preferred that. As you have only seen the two last

letters, I must entreat you to cast your eye over those preceding ; because I apprehend they will justify an observation or two I made this morning, when I had the honour of paying my compliments to you at camp.

Be assured that if I am between heaven and earth, I will be on Tuesday evening at Tilbury's, the Red Lion at Bagshot; and on Wednesday morning will play this duet with his lordship.

It is a real satisfaction to me that his lordship is to be accompanied by a gentleman of colonel Berkeley's worth and honour.

This will be delivered to you by my adjutant, who attends me to Bagshot. I shall not bring any servant with me, from the fear of any of the parties being known. My pistols only, or his lordship's, at his option, shall decide this point.

I beg the favour of you to return me the letters, as I mean to leave Winchester this

evening. I have lord Bruce's leave of absence for ten days.

I am,

with sincere regard,

Sir,

your very humble servant,

JOHN WILKES.

I hope that we make a *partie quarrée* for supper on Tuesday at Bagshot.

[The Answer.]

SIR,

I HAVE read all the letters; and shall depend upon the pleasure of supping with you at Tilbury's, the Red Lion at Bagshot, on Tuesday evening. My servant will attend me, as going alone would give room for suspicion; but you may depend upon his following your direction at Bagshot, and that he shall not be seen where you

would not have him. I am much obliged
by your favourable opinion ; and am

your very humble servant,

N. BERKELEY.

Camp near Winchester, Sept. 30, 1762.

G H O S T.

‘ Here she [*Fancy*] made lordly temples rise
Before the pious Dashwood’s eyes ;
Temples which, built aloft in air,
May serve for show, if not for pray’r.’

Book IV.

[MR. WILKES’S curious description of
West Wycombe church, was his commen-
tary on the above lines:]

I AM just returned (says he) from a tour
into Buckinghamshire, which has afforded

me much pleasure. The noble prospect from Cliefden-house enchanted me, and I was in raptures with the many elegant beauties of Stowe. As an *Englishman*, I was pleased that all the great patriots and heroes of *my* country, Alfred, king William the Third, Hampden, sir Walter Raleigh, &c. receive *there* that just tribute of praise, which this nation, while it remains free, will continue to pay to superior virtue.

At Stowe, both ancient and modern virtue are enshrined with grateful magnificence. Not only good taste, but patriotism, are conspicuous in that delightful paradise; the favourite abode of the virtues, graces, and muses. Stowe, however, has so often been described by abler pens, that I shall dwell no longer there; though I never leave it without the most sensible regret.

I returned by West Wycombe, and passed a day in viewing the villa of lord Le Despenser; and the church he has just

built on the *top* of a hill, for the convenience and devotion of the town at the *bottom* of it. I must own, the noble lord's gardens gave me no stronger idea of his virtue or patriotism, than the situation of the new-built church did of his piety. Some churches have been built from devotion, others from parade or vanity; I believe this is the first church which has been built for a prospect.

The word *memento* in immense letters on the steeple, surprised and perplexed me. I could not find the *mori*:—or perhaps the other word was *meri*; from the practice, as well as the precept, of the noble lord. As to the elegance of the Latin, his lordship has embarrassed himself as little about that, as he has about the elegance of his English. *Memento meri* is, besides, more monkish; and therefore more becoming *St. Francis**. This conjecture, that the other word on the outside must be *meri*, is far-

* This allusion is explained by the contents of page 61, below.

ther strengthened by the magnificent gilt ball at the top of the steeple : which is hollowed ; and made so very convenient, on the inside, for the celebration not of devotional but convivial rites, that it is the best Globe tavern I was ever in :—but I must own that I was afraid my descent from it would have been as precipitate, as his lordship's was from a high station, which turned his head too *.

I admire likewise the silence and secrecy which reign in that ‘ great globe ;’ undisturbed but by his jolly songs, very unfit for the profane ears of the world below. As to secrecy, it is the most convenient place imaginable ; and it is whispered, that a negotiation was here *entanée* by the noble lord himself, with Messrs. Wilkes and Churchill. The event will shew the amazing power of his lordship's oratory : but if, from per-

* Lord Le Despenser, when sir Francis Dashwood, was chancellor of the exchequer, during the time lord Bute was first lord of the treasury.

verseness, neither of those gentlemen then yielded to his wise reasons, nor to his dazzling offers, they were both delighted with his divine *milk-punch*.

There was, for many years, in the great room at the King's Arms tavern in Old Palace Yard, an original picture of sir Francis Dashwood, presented by himself to the *dilettanti* club. He is in the habit of a Franciscan, kneeling before the Venus de Medicis, and a bumper in his hand, with the words MATRI SANCTORUM in capitals. The public saw, and were for many years offended with, so infamous a picture; yet it remained there till that club left the house.

I made afterwards a little tour to the celebrated abbey of Medmenham; the description of which, I am sure, will entertain you.

CANDIDATE.

‘——— Whilst womanhood, in habit of a nun,
At Medmenham lies, by backward monks undone;
A nation’s reckoning, like an alehouse score,
Whilst Paul the aged chalks behind the door,
Compell’d to hire a foe to cast it up;
D—— * shall pour, from a communion cup,
Libations to “ the goddess without eyes,”
And hob or nob in cyder or excise.’

MEDMENHAM (or, as it is pronounced, Mednam) Abbey is a very large house on the banks of the Thames, near Marlow in Buckinghamshire. It was formerly a convent of Cistertian monks. The situation is remarkably fine. Beautiful hanging woods, soft meadows, a chrystal stream, and a grove of venerable old elms near the house,

* Sir Francis Dashwood.

with the retiredness of the mansion itself, made it as sweet a retreat as the most poetical imagination could create.

Sir Francis Dashwood, sir Thomas Stapleton, Paul Whitehead, Mr. Wilkes, and other gentlemen, to the number of twelve, rented the abbey, and often retired thither in the summer. Among other amusements, they had sometimes a mock celebration of the rites of the foreign religious orders; of the Franciscans in particular, for the gentlemen had taken that title from their founder, sir Francis Dashwood. ‘Paul the aged’* was secretary and steward to the order. Mr. Wilkes had not been at the abbey for many months before the publication of this poem in 1764.

No profane eye has dared to penetrate into the English Eleusinian mysteries of the *chapter-room*; where the monks assembled on all solemn occasions, and the more se-

* Mr. Whitehead.

cret rites were performed, and libations poured forth in much pomp to the Bona Dea. I shall only venture to relate what many mortal eyes have seen ; and

—— sit mihi fas audita loqui.

Over the grand entrance, was the famous inscription on Rabelais's abbey of Thelème : *Fay ce que voudras*. At the end of the passage, over the door, was : *Aude, hospes, contemnere opes !* At one end of the refectory was Harpocrates, the Egyptian god of silence ; at the other end the goddess Angerona, that the same duty might be enjoined to both sexes.

The garden, the grove, the orchard, the neighbouring woods, all spoke the loves and frailties of the younger monks ; who seemed at least to have *sinned naturally*.

On a pedestal was a whimsical representation of Trophonius's cave, from which all creatures were said to come out melancholy.

Near the abbey was a small neat temple, erected to Cloacina ; with the inscription : ‘ This Chapel of Ease was founded in the ‘ year 1760.’ Facing the entrance, in the inside, was:

*Æquè pauperibus,prodest, locupletibus æquè ;
Æquè, neglectum, pueris senibusque nocebit.*

[Grose, in his Antiquities, gives the following account of this abbey :]

‘ Here remain, still standing, the walls
‘ of the north aisle of the abbey church ;
‘ it is in length sixteen yards, and in breadth
‘ four. It seems, by this, to have been a
‘ neat stately building, well wrought with
‘ Ashler work ; the windows high and
‘ spacious. It probably consisted of a
‘ body, and two side aisles and chan-

‘ cel, and had a tower at the west
‘ end. The house that is now called
‘ the Abbey-house, seems to have been
‘ patched up after the Dissolution. Since
‘ Browne Willis wrote, most of the re-
‘ mains he mentions have fallen or been
‘ taken down ; the adjacent grounds ele-
‘ gantly laid out and planted ; and the ab-
‘ bey-house repaired, and made again
‘ conventual, by a society of gentlemen
‘ who lived together in a kind of monastic
‘ state—their abbot was a noble peer.
‘ The rules observed by these monks have
‘ not been published ; but, from some of
‘ them which have transpired, we may
‘ suppose they were not quite so rigid as
‘ those of their brethren of La Trappe.
‘ This was in some measure indicated by
‘ the motto over their door ; which, carved
‘ in large letters, still stands thus :

‘ FAY CE QUE VOUDRAS.’

FRAGMENT OF A
DEDICATION
TO THE BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER *.

THERE is nothing in the poet's works more highly finished than this Fragment : a most happy vein of irony runs through the whole, and the grave Cervantes mask of humour never once falls off. Though we have only a part of what was intended, yet the episcopal hero shines so much in the different lights of a pious prelate, a profound critic, an exemplary clergyman, and a meek divine, that we are at a loss which we ought the most to admire.

The benevolence only of the bishop remains unsung ; I mean, his benevolence to *man*. As to the *other* due benevolence of which St. Paul speaks, it ought in strictness to be considered as a part of justice, or family duty, to good Mrs. W——.

* Dr. William Warburton.

I need not tell so great a scholar as her husband, that Horace calls it *uxorius amnis*.

‘ I ask no favour ; not one Note I crave.’

IN the Candidate the poet says,

Nor soul-gall'd *bishop* damn me with a Note.

‘ ————— my mortal journey done.’

THE last act of his* life was an act of humanity and friendship. Mr. Wilkes, under the despotic administration of the Thane's† deputies, had the honour to be an exile. Mr. Churchill came to France, on a visit to a friend; and died, of a miliary fever, at Boulogne, on the 4th of November, 1764. The goodness of his heart, and the firmness of his philosophy, were in full lustre during the whole time of a very severe illness; nor were the amazing faculties

* Churchill's.

† Lord Bute.

of his mind in the least impaired till a few moments before his death.

An inscription, in the close style of the ancients, engraven on a sepulchral urn of alabaster, gives us his true character, as a friend, a poet, and a patriot:—

“ Carolo Churchill,
amico jucundo,
poetæ acri,
civi optimè de patriâ merito,
P.
Johannes Wilkes, 1765.”

‘ In spirit I ’m right proud ; nor can endure
The mention of a bribe.’

THE reverend emissary of lord Holland *, who waited on the poet soon after the advertisement of “Ayliffe’s Ghost, by C. Churchill,” can best explain this passage.

* Mr. Francis, the translator of Horace.

The untimely death of the author deprived us of that elegy; but his lordship was convinced, at last, that every man has NOT his price.

‘Let thy own offspring all thy fortunes share.’

THE irony here is best explained by a passage in the Duelist :

No husband, though he's truly wed;
Though on his knees a child is bred,
No father.

‘Thy open front; thy love-commanding eye,
Where fifty Cupids, as in ambush, lie.’

I NEVER could form an adequate idea of what Virgil calls the *lætos oculi honores*, the *lumen purpureum*, till I was blest with a sight of William Warburton, lord bishop of Gloucester. His fine eye carries us even beyond what a pagan poet could

possibly conceive ; for it beams forth all the meekness and forbearance, all the mildness and benevolence, of that Gospel which is engraven on his heart. The beauty and symmetry of features in his face, are indeed admirable ; but beauty and symmetry are by no means confined to his face. His whole figure excels the most perfect Grecian forms ; and, in my opinion, is a superior composition to the Apollo Belvidere. The harmony of the soul, too, seems exactly answerable to that of the body. Among all the arts of ancient Egypt, which the bishop so much admires, I most regret that the art of embalming, in such a manner as to preserve even the minutest feature, is now totally lost. The Warburton set of features might otherwise have convinced our children's children, that the most heavenly fire of the eye, and true dignity of aspect, may be tempered with grace, and sweetness. Our posterity, in that case, would have exclaimed, as we

do now, “How meek, how gentle, how forbearing, was this primitive Christian !

“What a grace is seated on that brow !”

This loss is the more to be lamented, because the heir to his fortunes is unhappily not the heir to his graces. It is generally allowed, that the boy does not in the least resemble him ; but seems to be of quite another mould, or *potter's* earth.

After the bishop of Gloucester, though at a great distance, comes Fox, lord Holland : most happy in that kind of look which steals the heart at first glance ; though the soul sits at squat, and peeps not from its hole.

‘Much did I wish, but little could I hope,
A friend in him who was the friend of Pope.’

I SHALL give only one instance of the bishop's friendship for Mr. Pope.

The judicious public applied to the duke of Chandos the character of Timon, in Pope's poetical Epistle to the earl of Burlington. Mr. Pope denied that he meant any allusion

to his grace ; and published a formal justification of himself, in a prose letter to the same earl. He says,—‘ a report, which
‘ in regard to that noble person was impertinent ; in regard to me, villainous :
‘ his humanity feels a concern for the injury done to me.’ Warburton’s edition, vol. viii. p. 194.

This injury is, however, done to him after his death. This villainy is charged on him by his friend, the bishop. After these lines,

Another age shall see the golden ear
Imbrown the slope, and nod on the parterre ;
Deep harvests bury all his pride had plann’d,
And laughing Ceres re-assume the land,

follows this note : ‘ Had the poet lived
‘ but three years longer, he had seen this
‘ prophecy fulfilled.’ Warburton’s edition, vol. iii. p. 228. This can only allude to the present state of Cannons, the duke of Chandos’s estate, near Edgeware.

Are these a Christian bishop's ideas of friendship ?

The total disregard of truth which Pope has shewn on this occasion, admits of no apology : but it ill became a friend, to prove to the world that the poet had solemnly asserted a falsehood. The four lines are, we are told, a prophecy of the fate of Cannons ; and we receive this information from a man who is appointed by the author himself to explain and illustrate his works. The character of Timon is, in every part, that of the duke of Chandos ; except a trifling circumstance or two, purposely disguised. The veil which Pope used, was too thin and flimsy : even in his defence we see his guilt. He says, ‘ I had
‘ no great cause to wonder that a cha-
‘ racter belonging to twenty should be
‘ applied to one, since by that means
‘ nineteen would escape the ridicule.’ Is not this a plain confession, that the character was applicable to the duke ; since it

belonged to all the twenty? A man who makes free with truth, will generally, sooner or later, be detected. The public at the very time despised the meanness of the poet, and will now equally condemn the baseness of such a friend. Pope, however, deserved only such a friend as this; from his treachery and breach of faith to lord Bolingbroke, in regard to the Letters on the Idea of a Patriot King. His three most remarkable friends were Swift, Bolingbroke, and (in the decline of life) the bishop of Gloucester. Warburton has taken much pains to prove that the two former, though men of genius, were very worthless characters; but has only *inadvertently* shewn that the last is the most worthless of the three, without being a man of genius.

The bishop has remarked, that the most sacred of all ties are friendship and gratitude. The force of his friendship we have found in regard to Mr. Pope: the strength

of gratitude Mr. Pitt found, in his bishop, to equal what the duke of Newcastle experienced in the greatest part of the bench—very apt, in their own phrase, to *forget their maker*.

‘ Might, like himself, teach his adopted son
 ‘Gainst all the world to quote a Warburton.’

THE poet does not mean the bishop’s *adopted* son master Warburton * ; but the sense he might teach *him* (Churchill) as an ‘ adopted son,’ &c.

Mr. Edwards, in the *Canons of Criticism*, has given us several instances, from the notes on Shakspeare, that the bishop has, in the poet’s words, ‘ adhered to Warburton against all the world.’ I shall add only one, from the commentaries on Pope :

“ Ev’n in a bishop I can spy desert:
 Secker is decent ; Rundel has a heart.” †

* This epithet *adopted* is illustrated in the last lines of the quotation from the *Duelist*, introduced above, in page 68.

† Pope’s *Epilogue to his Satires*, Dialogue ii.

The note is : ‘ These words are *another*
‘ instance of the malignity of the public
‘ judgement. The poet thought, and
‘ not without reason, that they conveyed
‘ a very high idea of the worthy person * to
‘ whom they applied : to be decent (or,
‘ to become every station in life in which
‘ a man is placed) being the noblest eulo-
‘ gium on his wisdom and virtue.’ War-
burton’s edition, vol. iv. p. 323.

To be barely decent is, however, very pen-
urious praise, and in this passage is almost
an insult; for it is remarkable, that Secker’s
being only “ decent” is followed, or rather
contrasted, with the high compliment to
Rundel, of “ having a heart.” The true
meaning is evident from another passage
of this very author :

Virtue she finds too painful an endeavour ;

Content to dwell in decencies for ever.

Essay on the Characters of Women.

The poet must have enjoyed, to a high
degree, his taste for ridicule, with a pedant

* i. e. Secker.

who believed that he was complimentary when he was sneering. The bishop of Oxford * did not, at that time, thank Pope for the praise of being barely decent: and, after all, decency is too often like gravity; a mere ‘outward form, to conceal some defect of the mind.’ †

I may now ask, whether these words, or (as the *bishop* ought to have said) the remarks on those words, are most ‘an instance of the malignity of the public judgement,’ or rather of the folly of *one* private judgement.

The other instance of the malignity of the public judgement, to which the bishop alludes, is the censure which he says has been passed on the following lines:

“Let humble Allen, with an awkward shame,
Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.” ‡

I must confess, I never heard these lines censured. I have often heard them commended. The public, indeed, passed a slight reproof on an alteration made by Pope in

* Dr. Secker. † Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*.

‡ Epilogue to the *Satires*, Dialogue i.

the first line, at Mr. Allen's desire. The bishop has not noticed it among the variations. In the old edition it stood, 'Let low-born Allen,' which agreed better with the 'awkward shame.' The epithet 'humble' by no means suited the man; who could not disguise that quakerpride, which is the most disgusting thing in the world, and ridiculously assumes humility.

‘ And Potter trembles, even in his grave.’

THOMAS POTTER, esq. of Ridgemont in Bedfordshire. He was son of a late archbishop of Canterbury; but was far from being himself a bigot. He was even suspected to be very well inclined towards several mistaken men, who differ from the Church of England. It is, however, very certain, he never went so far as to join in communion with any of the sectaries. He had great abilities for parliament, and was no

less amiable in private life. 'The liveliness of his wit sometimes, indeed, carried him too far ; and even revealed religion did not always escape his ridicule : but we ought to remember Martin Luther's apology of himself ; ' consider, I was bred a monk.' It is to be presumed, he kept a strict guard over his tongue when he was with the good Mr. Allen, or with the bishop of Gloucester and his lady ; at least, in the latter period of his life. In the former, if we believe the poet, neither he nor the bishop was very exemplary. In the third book of the *Duelist* it is said, that the bishop

————— liv'd with sinners ;
Herded with infidels, for dinners :
With such an emphasis and grace
Blasphem'd, that Potter kept no pace.

The bishop seems, by this, to have outstripped the layman in the race of infidelity, if the picture is not overcharged.

This gentleman's many accomplishments and acquired talents, together with a high admiration of their two characters, recommended him to the postmaster of Bath, and his episcopal nephew. His fine natural parts introduced him to the intimacy of the niece, no incompetent judge. Yet this excellent lady could not help sometimes lamenting that Tom was vastly wild :

————— Then calls her child,
And swears that Tom is vastly wild.

Duelist, Book III.

I rather mention this circumstance, that posterity may not be misled. Some have imagined that the child was christened Thomas. It is a mistake : he was not named after his father, but after his uncle Mr. Allen ; we have church authority for this. The baptismal register informs us, that we ought to call the boy Ralph, Ralph.

‘ With all the conscious pride of innocence,
Methinks I hear him in his own defence
Bear witness to himself; whilst all men knew,
By gospel rules, his witness to be true.’

THIS alludes to what passed in the house of lords on the 15th of November, 1763. The bishop of Gloucester made a complaint against Mr. Wilkes, of a breach of privilege; that the name of Warburton had been put by him to a variety of notes, in a wicked poem, called, an Essay on Woman *. It is said, that these notes were of an erudition so deep and so uncommon, that the learned bishop might have been suspected of being the author; but, at the same time, of so ludicrous a cast, it was highly improbable a grave divine would employ his time in that way. The matter is now fully cleared up: for the bishop, rising in his place, and, with the utmost solemnity, laying his hand on his heart, de-

* See vol. ii. page 8, of the present work.

clared, that he did not write *any one* of those notes ; and called *his* God to witness the truth of the assertion. He obtained, in this instance, full credit to what he affirmed. What a pity it is, that, to vindicate his reputation, he did not at the same time deny the notes on Shakspeare and Pope !

The Christian zeal of the bishop did not end with his own vindication. It flamed forth with becoming fury against the poem itself ; which he declared was ‘ worthy of the devil ;’ then, after a short pause, ‘ No ; I beg the devil’s pardon : he is incapable of ‘ writing it.’ He would not venture there even a little satire, but (as a well-bred Frenchman) with a *pardonnez moi* to temper it. He is fearful of offending ; equally prudent and polite ; and keeps a very good look-out to futurity. He remembers the caution of the wary Spaniard ; who always said, ‘ my good lord, the Devil,’ that he might in all events be in favour *below*. A few years ago, the bishop published a treatise upon Grace, or the office and operations of

the Holy Spirit ; in the preface of which he says, ‘ I have a master above, and I have one below.’ Lord Bute has been his master above ; is the person whose pardon he begged, his master *below* ?

‘ Pitied himself, in turn had pitied you.’

“ SERIOUSLY, my lord of Gloucester is to be pitied.”

Pope: Warburton’s edition, vol. iv.

p. 197.

‘ But you, my lord, renounced attorneyship.’

THE commentator of Pope has been careful to give us not only all the blots in the foul copy of the poet, but most of the variations in the printed editions. One however, which is remarkable, he has omitted. In the first book of the *Dunciad* we read, according to the bishop’s edition :

“ What can I now ? my Fletcher cast aside,
Take up the Bible, once my better guide ?”

Vol. v. p. 101.

But no notice is taken of the former editions, published by Pope himself; in several of which we read,

“ But what can I? my Flaccus cast aside,
Take up *The Attorney's* (once my better) *Guide*?”

with this note, ‘ alluding to his first profession, of an attorney.’ The bishop could not bear to copy these words; which are spoken by Cibber, the hero of the *Dunciad*, who was no dunce. Did he fear they would rather lead the reader to one of the

low-born, cell-bred, selfish, servile band;
to a

reverend flamen in his lighten'd dress,
formerly an attorney?

Dunciad, Book ii. 354-6.

The name and profession of an attorney, my lord did indeed renounce; but the wrangling and caviling, the subterfuges and mean arts of vile attorneys (as Pope calls them, vol. iii. p. 247, Warb. ed.) may be found in all his controversial writings. He

can, however, at a pinch, still do business for himself as an attorney; and, in the idea of the world, Mr. Allen's will does honour to the proficiency he made in his former trade.

‘ Doctor, dean, bishop, Glo’ster, and my lord.’

It is always difficult to mount the first step of the ladder of preferment. This simple title of Doctor would not for above thirteen years take to the name *Warburton*. In 1741, Pope says, “I have received some chagrin at the delay of your degree at Oxon” (vol. ix. p. 341.) There was, indeed, no small delay from the university. At last, in 1754, the degree of doctor in divinity was conferred on him by the archbishop of Canterbury.

The bishopric of Gloucester repaid the petticoat obligations which a princess had to Mr. and Mrs. Allen, during her residence at Prior-park*.

* Near Bath.

A
LETTER
TO THE
WORTHY ELECTORS
OF THE
BOROUGH OF AYLESBURY,
IN THE
COUNTY OF BUCKS *.

* This letter was written by Mr. Wilkes at Paris, and was first printed there. It was afterwards printed in London; but in this edition many passages, and even whole paragraphs, were omitted. In the year 1767, Mr. Wilkes revised it, made several corrections in it, and printed a few complete copies at Paris for his particular friends in England. From one of these copies this article is here taken.

TO THE WORTHY ELECTORS OF AYLESBURY.

GENTLEMEN,

THE very honourable, unanimous, and repeated marks of esteem, you conferred on me, by committing to my trust your liberty, safety, property, and all those glorious privileges which are your birth-right as Englishmen, entitle you to my warmest thanks, and to the highest tribute of gratitude my heart can pay. Yet, in the peculiar circumstances of my case, I think that I ought not at present to rest contented with thanking you. I have always found a true pleasure in submitting to you my parliamentary conduct. It is now more particularly my duty; and when I reflect on the real importance and interesting nature of those great events in which, as your representative, I have been more immediately concerned, I am exceedingly anxious, not barely to justify myself, but to

obtain the sanction of your approbation. It has ever been my ambition to approve myself worthy of the choice you have more than once made of me as your deputy to the great council of the nation, with an unanimity equally honourable and endearing. The consciousness of having faithfully discharged my trust; of having acted an upright and steady part in parliament, as well as in other most arduous circumstances; makes me dare to hope, that you will continue to me, what I most value,—the good opinion and friendship of my worthy constituents. Having the happiness of being born in a country where the name of vassal is unknown, where Magna Charta is the inheritance of the subject, I have endeavoured to support and merit those privileges to which my birth gave me the clearest right. Secure as I am of fully justifying my conduct,—could I persuade myself that I have acted up to the sacred ideas of liberty which warm the

hearts and inspire the actions of my countrymen, I should not, under all the variety of the most unjust and cruel persecutions, be quite unhappy.

The various charges brought against me, may be reduced to two heads. The one is of a public, the other of a private nature. The first is grounded on the political paper called the North Briton, N^o 45; the other respects a small part of a ludicrous poem, which was stolen out of my house. The two accusations are only so far connected, that I am convinced there is not a man in England who believes that, if the first had not appeared, the second would ever have been called in question.

The majority in the house of commons, on the 15th of November 1763, resolved, ‘ that the paper entitled The
‘ North Briton, N^o 45, is a false, scan-
‘ dalous, and seditious libel; containing
‘ expressions of the most unexampled insolence and contumely towards his majesty,

‘ the grossest aspersions upon both houses
‘ of parliament, and the most audacious
‘ defiance of the authority of the whole
‘ legislature ; and most manifestly tending
‘ to alienate the affections of the people
‘ from his majesty, to withdraw them from
‘ their obedience to the laws of the realm,
‘ and to excite them to traiterous insurrec-
‘ tions against his majesty’s government.’
These are the words of the resolution. I
mean to examine them with some accuracy.

The first charge is, ‘ that the North Bri-
‘ ton, N^o 45, is a *false* libel.’ The resolution
was moved by lord North; yet, in a tedious
speech, he did not attempt to dispute the
veracity of any one paragraph in the whole
paper. I was in my place during that de-
bate, and took notice to the house that his
lordship had not said a word to prove the
falsity of any one sentence ; but I could
obtain no satisfaction, not even a reply, on
that head. On my trial before lord Mans-
field, the word ‘ false’ was omitted in the
information ; because, I suppose, the court

of king's-bench knew that I would prove publicly on oath in that court, by the highest authorities, that every word in it was *true*. The word 'false' is not to be found among the various epithets applied to this paper in either of the warrants issued by lord Halifax. I am bold to declare, upon the most careful perusal of this paper, that there is not any one particular advanced which is not founded on fact, and that every line in it is strictly and scrupulously conformable to truth. I will not compliment the present profligate majority in the house of commons so far as to say, they were so well informed that they knew the exact truth of every assertion in that paper. One particular, however, came within their knowledge: — the means by which, it is hinted, the entire approbation of parliament, of the preliminary articles of the late inglorious peace, was obtained; and the previous step to the obtaining that entire approbation,—the large debt contracted on the civil list. They knew

this assertion was extremely *true*; and I am as ready to own that it was extremely *scandalous*.

The second charge, of 'scandalous,' must then be admitted in its full extent; still keeping in our view that it is *true*. But to whom is it *scandalous*? To the majority, who have sacrificed the interests of the nation by giving the entire approbation of parliament, of which so much parade is made in the speech, to an act which ought to have been followed by an impeachment:—to the minister, who made the late ignominious peace, and in the very first year of it imposed on us an intolerable excise:—to the worst of vipers in our bosom,—the tories, who have never failed to support his unconstitutional measures; who have made us almost forget the infamy of their ancestors at Utrecht, by the greater sacrifices of the peace of Paris. These are the objects of satire of a paper, which deserved indeed the highest resentment of the majority, because it had pro-

claimed their disgrace, their *scandal*, through all Europe. It was very natural for these men no longer to suffer the supposed author to sit among them; and I should have gloried in my expulsion, if it had not dissolved a political connection with my friends at Aylesbury, which did me real honour.

Another charge is, that the paper is a ‘*sedition*’ libel; tending to withdraw the ‘people from their obedience to the laws of the realm, and to excite them to *traiterous* insurrections against his majesty’s government.’ By the first warrant under which I was apprehended, the North Briton, N^o 45, was denominated a ‘treasonable’ paper. In the second, by which I was committed to the Tower, *that* word too was omitted; so that the greatest enemies of this paper seem to give up its being either ‘false’ or ‘treasonable.’ Now, the charge is varied by the majority in the house of commons, with all the little quibbling of attorneys. The paper is not ‘treasonable’

sonable ;' but ' it tends to excite *traiterous* ' insurrections.' It is remarkable, that the epithet ' traiterous' is here given to insurrection, as the supposed consequence of a supposed libel; whereas the Scots, who appeared in open rebellion so lately as 1745, and who even defeated regular forces, were (in the weekly writings against the North Briton, published under the patronage of the Scottish minister, and paid for by him out of the public treasure) only termed ' insurgents.' Yet, in fact, no *insurrection* of any kind ever did, or could, follow from this publication; even in those parts of the kingdom so lately subjected to all the insolence and cruelty of the most despicable of our species,—the mean, petty exciseman. This is the strongest case which can possibly be put. The excise is the most abhorred monster that ever sprung from arbitrary power; and the new mode of it is spoken of, throughout this paper, as the greatest grievance on the subject: yet, even in this case, obedience to the laws and all lawful authority is strictly

enjoined ; and no opposition but what is consistent with the laws and the constitution, is allowed. The words are very temperate, cautious, and well guarded. “ Every *legal* attempt of a tendency contrary to the spirit of concord, will be deemed a justifiable resistance, warranted by the spirit of the English constitution.” Is this ‘ withdrawing the people from their obedience to the *laws* of the realm ?’ Is resistance recommended ; but, expressly, only so far as it is strictly *legal* ? Let the impartial public determine, whether this is the language of sedition, or can have the least tendency ‘ to excite traiterous insurrections ;’ or whether the house of commons have not made a *false* and groundless charge.

The general charge that ‘ the North Briton, N^o 45, is a *libel*,’ scarcely deserves an answer ; because the term is vague, and still remains undefined by our law. Every man applies it to what he dislikes. A spirited satire will be deemed a libel by a wicked minister, and by a corrupt judge,

who feel or who dread the lash. In my opinion, the rankest *libel* of modern times is the false and fulsome address of the majority in this house of commons, on the preliminary articles. They said that they had considered them with their best attention; they expressed the strongest sentiments of gratitude; they gave their hearty applause; they declared that the peace would be no less honourable than profitable, solid, and, in all human probability, permanent. Were the house of commons serious in this address; which was drawn up and presented, even before any one of the gross blunders in the preliminaries had been amended? If they were, the body of the people judged better; and did not hesitate to give their clear opinion, that the glories of the war were sacrificed by an inadequate and insecure peace, which could not fail of soon retrieving the affairs of France. Time has already proved that the nation judged right, and that the peace is in almost every part infamous and rotten; contrary to the vain boast in *the*

minister's speech * at the beginning of the same session,—‘ the utmost care has been taken to remove all occasions of future disputes between my subjects and those of France and Spain, and thereby to add security and permanence to the blessings of peace :’ a declaration not believed by the nation at the time it was made ; and since, from a variety of facts, known to be not founded on truth. The North Briton did not suffer the public to be misled. He acknowledged no privileged vehicle of fallacy. He considered the liberty of the press as the bulwark of all our liberties, as instituted to open the eyes of the people ; and he seems to have thought it the duty of a political writer to follow truth wherever it leads. In his behalf I would ask even lord Mansfield, Can *truth*

* The British public have this important obligation (among others) to Mr. Wilkes:—that he first introduced and established in parliament the custom and right of regarding and animadverting upon the king's speech as the declaration of the minister.

be a *libel*? Is it so in the king's-bench? * Though it has always found a cold and unwelcome reception from his lordship, though it has through life proved much more his enemy than his friend, yet surely he has not been used to treat it as a libel. I do not know what the doctrine of the king's-bench now is; but I am sure that it will be a satisfactory answer to the honest part of mankind, who follow the dictates of sound sense (and not the jargon of law, nor the court flattery of venal parliaments), that the North Briton, N° 45, cannot be a *libel*, because it does not in any one line deviate from *truth*.

This unlucky paper is likewise said to contain 'expressions of the most unexam-pled insolence and contumely towards his majesty, most manifestly tending to alienate the affections of the people from his majesty;' and by the hirelings of the mi-

* Lord Mansfield had not, at that time, made his famous judicial declaration, that 'the greater the *truth*, the greater the *libel*.'

nistry it is always, in private, charged with personal disrespect to the king. It is, however, most certain that not a single word personally disrespectful to his majesty is to be found in any part of it. On the contrary, the sovereign is mentioned, not only in terms of decency, but with that regard and reverence which are due from a good subject to a good king;—‘ a prince of so many great and amiable qualities, whom England truly reveres. The personal character of our present amiable sovereign makes us easy and happy that so great a power is lodged in such hands.’ Are these the “ expressions of the most unexampled insolence and contumely toward his majesty,” which the majority in this house of commons have declared that the paper contains? Are these expressions “ most manifestly tending to alienate the affections of the people from his majesty?” The majority who could vote this, seem equally superior to any regard for truth, or modest fear of detection. The author

of that paper, so far from making any personal attack on his sovereign, has even vindicated him personally from some of the late measures, which were so severely censured by the judicious and unbiassed public. He exclaims, with an honest indignation, ‘ What a shame was it to see the security of this country, in point of military force, complimented away, *contrary to the opinion of royalty itself*; and sacrificed to the prejudices and to the ignorance of a set of people the most unfit, from every consideration, to be consulted on a matter relative to the security of the house of Hanover !’ When the speech is mentioned ; when the various absurdities, and even fallacies of it, are held out to the nation ; it is always called, in the language of parliament, and of the constitution, the minister’s speech : and the author declares that he doubts ‘ whether the imposition is greater on the sovereign, or on the nation :’ so tender has he been of

the honour of his prince ; so zealous in his vindication. The minister is, indeed, every where treated with the contempt and indignation which he has merited ; but he is always carefully distinguished from the sovereign. Every kingdom in the world has, in its turn, found occasion to lament that princes of the best intentions have been deceived and misled by wicked and designing ministers and favourites. It has likewise, in most countries, been the fate of the few daring patriots who have honestly endeavoured to undeceive their sovereign, to feel the heaviest marks of his displeasure. It is, however, I think, rather wonderful among us, even in these times, that a paper which contains the most dutiful expressions of regard to his majesty, should be treated with such unusual severity ; and yet that so many other publications of the same date, full of the most deadly venom, should pass totally unregarded. Some of these papers contained the most opprobrious reflections

on that true patron of liberty, the late king; whose memory is embalmed with the tears of Englishmen, while his ashes are rudely trampled upon by others, in whom his godlike attribute of mercy had pardoned the crime of unprovoked rebellion. Others were full of the most indecent abuse on our great protestant ally, the king of Prussia; on the near relation of his present majesty, who has merited so highly of the nation by fixing the crown in the house of Hanover; on the staunchest friends of freedom, the city of London, and on the first characters among us. Yet all these papers have passed uncensured by ministers, secretaries, and by the two houses of parliament.

There only remains one other charge: that the North Briton, N^o 45, contains ‘the grossest aspersions upon both houses of parliament, and the most audacious defiance of the *authority* of the whole legislature.’ It is to be lamented that the

majority of either house of parliament should ever give just ground for any aspersion, or fall into general contempt with the people. We have seen their actions, and we know the mercenary motives of them. When 'the grossest aspersions' are complained of, the question is, have they been merited? are they well founded? It is in vain they talk of their *authority*. It is departed from them. Authority, which is founded on esteem and reverence, and is the constant attendant only of those who are believed to be good and virtuous, has long ago left them; but, I must own, their *power* still remains. We have seen to what unjustifiable lengths this has been carried; and a man who is rash enough to make an impotent and unavailing attack upon it, will soon find himself an unpitied victim.

All thinking men are full of apprehensions at the approach of the meeting of parliament; and the nation impatiently expects the allotted term of resuming a power

which has been so shamefully abused, by setting aside those who have ignominiously betrayed their trust, and made the noblest blood of our heroes to have been spilt almost in vain. Under the arbitrary Stuarts, when our more than Roman senates dared to bring truth to the foot of the throne, and made the trembling tyrant obey her sacred voice, the nation was in love with parliaments; because they were the steady friends of liberty, and never met but in favour of the subject—to redress real grievances. Now, we are alarmed at every approaching session: because we know that a corrupt majority assemble only to make their own terms with the minister; to load their fellow-subjects with the most partial taxes, in order to pay the amazing number of useless places and pensions created only to prevent their mutiny or desertion; or to surrender to the crown those privileges of parliament, which were extorted from former prerogative princes for

the safety of the people ; and I fear they meet to forge fetters for themselves and their posterity.

I have thus, gentlemen, gone through all the objections made against this paper, (which is certainly innocent, perhaps meritorious,) only to shew the extreme injustice of the treatment I experienced as the supposed author. The most cruel orders were given by the deceased secretary of state, to drag me out of my bed at midnight. A good deal of humanity, and some share of timidity, prevented the execution of such ruffian-like commands. I was made a prisoner in my own house, by several of the king's messengers ; who produced only a general warrant, issued without oath, and neither naming nor describing me. I therefore refused to obey a precept which I knew to be illegal. I was, however, by violence, carried before the earls of Egremont and Halifax ; who thought it worth *their* while to ask me a tolerable

number of plain questions, to not one of which I thought it worth *my* while to give a plain answer. It is no small satisfaction to me to know, that I have not a friend in the world who wishes a single word unsaid by me in the critical moment of that examination. I informed their lordships of the orders actually given by the court of common-pleas for my habeas-corpus; notwithstanding which I was committed to the Tower, the custody of me shifted into other hands, and that act for the liberty of the subject eluded. Although the offence of which I stood accused was undoubtedly bailable, yet for three days every person was refused admittance to me; and the governor was obliged to treat me in a manner very different from the great humanity of his nature, for he had received orders to consider me as a *close* prisoner. I rejoice that I can say, I am the only instance of such rigorous treatment since the accession of the mild house of Brunswick, although

the Tower has twice been crowded with even rebels from the northern parts of the island; and therefore I shall continue to regret the wretched and cowardly policy, the indecent partiality, and even injustice, of conferring on Scotsmen *all* the governments of the few conquests not tamely given up by the Scottish minister—conquests won by the valour of the united forces of England, Scotland, and Ireland. While I suffered this harsh confinement, my house in Great George-street was plundered; all my papers were seized; and some of a very nice and delicate nature, not bearing the most distant relation to the affairs of government, were divulged—as if administration were determined to shew, that men who had violated public justice were incapable of private honour.

Two days previous to my being heard before a court of justice, I had the grief to find that my enemies had prevailed on his majesty to shew me a public mark of his

displeasure, by superseding me as colonel of the regiment of my own county, without any complaint against me; which could not but give such a step the very unconstitutional appearance of influencing or intimidating my judges. When I was brought before the court of common-pleas, I pleaded the cause of universal liberty. It was not the cause of peers and gentlemen only, but of all the middling and inferior class of people, who stand most in need of protection, which (as I observed) was on that day the great question before the court. I was discharged from the imprisonment by the unanimous sentence of my judges, without giving any bail or security.

On the first day of the meeting of parliament, I humbly submitted my grievances to the house of commons; as they were chosen to be the guardians of the liberties of the people against the despotism of ministers. I likewise voluntarily entered my appearance to the actions brought at law against me,

as soon as I knew the determination of the majority, that all the irregularities against me should be justified ; and that no privilege should be allowed in my case, even as to the mode of proceeding, which was the most harsh that the rancour of party could devise.

The first charge exhibited against me was, for being the author of the North Briton, N^o 45 ; and I was expelled the house of commons on that charge, after a loose examination, at their bar, of witnesses without oath. The judicial proceedings against me, as the supposed author, were however dropped ; and I was afterwards tried in the king's-bench, only for the republication of it. If the charge against me as author was just, and could be supported on oath, why was I not tried at law on that charge ? If the charge was unjust, and could not be supported on oath, why was I expelled ? If the republication is a crime, it was openly committed by the printers of several newspapers ; who still remain unnoticed,

although their names appear to their several papers. This is surely a glaring proof of the greatest partiality.

My personal enemy, lord Mansfield, chose to try both the causes against me : that he might in the most dastardly manner, under the colour of law, avenge the attack made on those known political principles of his so inconsistent with the glorious Revolution, on the rooted attachment of himself and his nearest relations to the Stuart family, on his partiality in the seat of justice, &c. &c.; which seem to have been favourite topics in the North Briton, and other political papers of which his lordship did me the honour to name me as the author. This had long rankled in his heart, and now the fairest opportunity of revenge presented itself. Having carefully studied the records, and finding that they did not insure the certainty he wished of my conviction, on the evening preceding the trials he sent for my solicitor to his own

house, and desired him to consent to the alterations proposed by his lordship in both the causes—that of the North Briton, N^o 45, and of the Essay on Woman. The chief-justice sunk into the crafty attorney; and made himself a party against the person accused before him as judge, when he ought to have presumed me innocent. My solicitor refused, and against his consent the records were there materially altered by his lordship's express orders; so that I was tried on two new charges, very different from those which I had answered. This is, I believe, the most daring violation of the rights of Englishmen, which has been committed by any judge since the time of Jeffreys; yet this arbitrary Scottish chief-justice still remains unimpeached, except in the hearts of the whole nation. Several of the jury were, by counter-notices signed by the summoning officer, prevented from attending on the day appointed for the trial; while others had not only private notice

given them of the real day, but likewise instructions for their behaviour. To crown the whole, lord Mansfield in his charge tortured both the law and the fact so grossly, that the audience were shocked no less at the indecency than at the partiality of his conduct. I was, during all this time, very dangerously ill with my daughter at Paris ; absolutely incapable of making any personal defence, and indeed totally ignorant of the two new questions on which I was to be tried.

The majority in the house of commons had, in this interval, grown so impatient for revenge, that they would not wait to see whether I should be intangled in the nice meshes of the curious Mansfield net which was to be spread for me. They voted my expulsion while I was confined to my bed at Paris ; although I had sent to their speaker the most authentic proof of my absolute inability to attend their summons, and had desired only a short delay *. Hu-

* Vol. ii. page 41.

manity pleaded my cause in vain. The corrupt and cankered hearts of those men, which had been shut against justice, were not open to pity. They were steeled against compassion; but I am sure they will feel remorse.

I now proceed to the other charge brought against me; which respects an idle poem called an *Essay on Woman*, and a few other detached verses. If so much had not been said on this subject, I should be superior to entering upon any justification of myself; because I will always maintain the right of private opinion in its fullest extent, when it is not followed by giving any open, public offence to any establishment, or indeed to any individual. The crime commences from this point; and the magistrate has then a right to interpose, and even to punish outrageous and indecent attacks on what any community has decreed to be sacred. Not only the rules of good-breeding, but the laws of society,

are then infringed. In my own closet I had a right to examine, and even to try by the keen edge of ridicule, any opinions I pleased. If I have laughed pretty freely at the glaring absurdities of a creed which our great Tillotson wished that the church of England was fairly rid of, it was in private I laughed. I gave no offence to any one individual of the community. The fact is, that, after the affair of the North Briton, the government bribed one of my servants to steal a part of the Essay on Woman, and the other pieces, out of my house *. Not quite a fourth-part of the volume had been printed at my own private press. The work had been discontinued for several months, before I had the least knowledge of the theft. Of that fourth-part only twelve copies were worked off, and I never gave one of those copies to any friend. In this infamous manner did government get possession of this new subject of accusation ; and, except in the case

* Vol. ii. pages 9, 10.

of Algernon Sydney, of this new species of crime: for a Stuart only could make the refinement in tyranny, of ransacking and robbing the recesses of closets and studies, in order to convert private amusements into state crimes. After the servant had been bribed to commit the theft in his master's house, the most abandoned man of the age (who in this virtuous reign, had risen to be secretary of state) was bribed to make a complaint to the house of lords, that I had published an infamous poem, which no man there had ever seen*. It was read before that great assembly of grave lords and pious prelates (excellent judges of wit and poetry!); and was ordered to lie on the table, for the clerks of the house to copy, and to publish through the nation. The whole of this proceeding was, I own, a public insult on order and decency; but the insult was committed by the house of lords, not by the accused member of the house of commons. The neat, prim, smirking

* Vol. ii. page 8.

chaplain of that babe of grace, that *gude cheeld* of the prudish kirk of Scotland, the earl of March, was highly offended at my having made an essay on woman. His nature could not forgive me that *ineffable* crime ; and his own conduct did not afford me the shadow of an apology. In great wrath he drew his grey-goose quill against me. The pious peer caught the alarm : and they both poured forth most woeful lamentations, their tender hearts overwhelmed with grief ; or, as the chaplain (who held the pen) said, with *griefs of griefs*. He proceeded to make very fair extracts, and afterwards to be-note them in the foulest manner. The most vile blasphemies were forged, and published as part of a work containing in reality nothing but fair ridicule on some doctrines which I could not believe ; mock panegyric, flowing from mere envy, which sickened at the superior parts and abilities, as well as wonderous deeds, of a man I could not love ; a few portraits

drawn from warm life, with the too high colouring of a youthful fancy; and two or three descriptions, perhaps too luscious—which, though Nature and woman might pardon, a Kidgell and a Mansfield could not fail to condemn.

I have now, gentlemen, gone through all the objections which have been made to my conduct in a public capacity. My enemies, finding that I was invulnerable in the part to which they pointed their most envenomed darts, afterwards attempted to assassinate my private character, and propagated an infinite variety of groundless calumnies against me. I have generally treated these with the contempt which they deserved; from the certainty that all who knew me would know that I was incapable of the things laid to my charge. A few falsehoods, advanced with more boldness than the rest, I was at the pains to refute. The Winchester story in particular (because it respected lord Bute's own son; and had been

ushered to the public with the greatest parade, as well as with all the impudence of malice, and rage of party) I disproved so fully, that I am sure, not the least shadow of a doubt remained in any man's mind as to my entire innocence of that most illiberal charge. I have lived so long among you, gentlemen, that I will rest every thing respecting me as a private man to the testimony which the experience of so many years authorizes you to give ; well knowing that true candour always weighs in the same balance faults and virtues. The shades in private life are darkened by an enemy, but scarcely seen by a friend. Besides, it is not given to every man to be as pious as lord Sandwich ; or as chaste, *in* and *out* of the marriage bed, in all thought, word, and deed, as the bishop of Gloucester *.

A few other particulars, gentlemen, deserve to be mentioned, that you may have

* Dr. Warburton. See above (the quotation from the Duelist), in page 68 of this volume.

before you the whole of my conduct in these interesting affairs. Immediately after the late flagrant breach of the laws, I thought it my duty to the community to commence actions against all the persons guilty. I despised the meanness of attacking only agents and deputies: I endeavoured to bring to the jurisdiction of the law the principals, the first and great offenders, the two secretaries of state. I blush for my country when I add, that though I have employed the ablest gentlemen of the profession, they have hitherto found it impossible even to force an appearance. Lord Egremont died, braving the justice of his country. Lord Halifax lives, perhaps to triumph over it, and to give the example to future secretaries of committing the grossest violation of the rights of the commons with impunity. The judicial proceeding at my suit commenced in the beginning of May twelve-month; and now, at the end of October in the present year, his lordship has not en-

tered any appearance—seeking shelter all the winter under privilege, all the summer under the chicane of law. The little offenders, indeed, have not escaped. Several honest juries have marked them with ignominy; and their guilt has been followed with legal punishment. But, what is of infinitely greater importance to the nation, we have heard from the bench, that GENERAL WARRANTS ARE ABSOLUTELY ILLEGAL. Such a declaration is now become in the highest degree interesting to the subject; because the majority in this courtly house of commons refused, the very last winter, to come to any resolution in favour of the rights of their fellow-subjects. We owe it likewise to the most upright, independent, and intrepid chief-justice of the court of common-pleas, that in the action against the under-secretary of state * THE SEIZURE OF PAPERS, except in cases of high treason, has been declared ILLEGAL.

* Mr. Wood.

When I reflect on these two most important determinations in favour of liberty, —the best cause, and the noblest stake, for which men can contend,—I congratulate my free-born countrymen, and am full of gratitude that heaven inspired me with a firmness and fortitude equal to the conduct of so arduous a business. Under all the wanton cruelties of usurped and abused power, the goodness of the cause supported me; and I never lost sight of the great object which I had from the first in my view, the preservation of the rights and privileges of every Englishman. I glory in the name, and will never forget the duties resulting from it. Though I am driven into exile from my dear country, I shall never cease to love and reverence its constitution, while it remains free. It will continue my last ambition to approve myself a faithful son of England; and I shall always be ready to give my life a willing sacrifice to my native country,

and to what it holds most dear—the security of our invaluable liberties. While I live, I shall enjoy the satisfaction of thinking that I have not lived in vain; that the present age has borne the noblest testimony to me; and that my name will pass with honour to posterity, for the upright and disinterested part I have acted, and for my unwearied endeavours to protect and secure the persons, houses, and papers, of my fellow-subjects, from arbitrary visits and seizures.

I am,

Gentlemen,

with much regard and affection,

your most obliged, and

obedient humble servant,

JOHN WILKES.

Paris, Oct. 22, 1764.

LETTERS
FROM
MR. WILKES
TO
MR. ALMON.

[PART of the first letter was incorrectly printed, many years ago, in one of the London newspapers: the letters which follow were never printed before. The originals, in Mr. Wilkes's own hand-writing, are in the possession of the publisher; to be seen by any gentleman who may choose to give himself the trouble of calling at N^o 71, in St. Paul's Church-yard.]

LETTER I.

Paris, June 5, 1764.

LORD HERTFORD gave yesterday a grand dinner to all the English here * except *one*, and to the true Irish whigs; nor, like a good courtier, did he omit the new converts, the Scots. He did not, however, observe the distinction which is so much in fashion on your side the water; for the true friends of the Hanover family were received as well, at least, as their known enemies. My lot is particular, and droll enough. I am the single Englishman not invited by the ambassador of my country, on the only day I can at Paris shew my at-

* His lordship was at this time the English ambassador at Paris.

achment to my sovereign, as if I was disaffected to the present establishment ; and yet I am frequently and grossly abused, because I am known to hate the other family, by a ridiculous fellow at Bouillon, whose master, the duke, married the sister of the Pretender's wife, a princess of Poland (of the house of Sobieski). This scribbler is one Rousseau ; who, by a wretched journal, does all he can, twice a month, to degrade a name made illustrious by one of the best French poets and by the great philosopher, though in these times no longer the citizen of Geneva. He lays at my door the North Britons against the Stuarts, and their dear friends in the north of our island.

You may believe me when I assure you, it was not the slightest mortification to me that I did not receive an invitation to the hotel de Brancas*. When I was asked

* Lord Hertford's hotel.

how it could happen that so staunch a whig as Mr. Wilkes was not invited on the 4th of June, I laughed, like the old Roman. I had rather you should ask, why I was *not* invited, than why I was invited? Perhaps it should have been asked, why some others *were* invited? The list of the company (of the *Macs* and *Sawneys* not in the French service) would divert you. I wish some of our neighbours from the other side of the Tweed may not keep the 21st* with more real devotion than they did the 4th. With respect to external rites, they were exemplary, as all new converts are; and I believe you find them in England good occasional conformists, though I shall ever imagine that it depends on contingencies how long they will continue such. To say the truth, I passed the day much more to my satisfaction, than I should have done in a set of mixed or suspicious company; a fulsome,

* The Pretender's birth-day.

dull dinner ; two hours of mighty grave conversation, to be purchased (in all civility) by six more of Pharaoh—which I detest, as well as every other kind of gaming.

As to the ambassador, I have never had the least connexion with him ; nor indeed wish it—nor, at this time, with his Scottish chaplain*. An ambassador generally owes his very nomination to ministerial influence, and is almost of course (though this does not extend through his family) under the direction of the ministers ; or perhaps, as to the present case, in all propriety we ought to say, of the *minister*, who, behind and between the curtains, still governs our island. I have never been presented at court, because an Englishman should be presented by the English ambassador, and I will not ask any favour of lord Hertford in the present state of public affairs ; though, as a private nobleman, I should be ambitious to merit, and

* Mr. James Trail, afterwards bishop of Down and Connor.

most fortunate to obtain, his friendship, as well as lord Beauchamp's*,—from their real sterling sense, great intrinsic worth, and (what sets off the whole) their amiable manners.

I have the protection of the laws, which I never offend; and I am at Paris like any other foreigner who has no favour to ask, nor need seek any other security.

The eloge which the noblest of poets † gives me, that I neither

— court the smile, nor dread the frown, of kings, is as exact truth here, as you know it to have been while I was at home. The small circle in which I now walk will, however, bear testimony to the just tribute of gratitude I pay to the humane virtues of a prince under whose mild and gentle government I have met with that protection which an innocent man had a right to expect, but could not find, in his own country, under his own sovereign. Yet let me do justice, and carry

* Now marquis of Hertford.

† Churchill.

my complaints to the source from whence they spring; to the base contrivances of ministers exceedingly wicked and corrupt, and besides stung to the quick, who had obtained a most unhappy ascendancy over the mind of their sovereign, and, to secure themselves, had made their most odious measures pass for the measures of their royal master, that the enormous load of their guilt might be thrown from themselves upon him—a practice not new, but of which every reign of the Stuarts furnishes examples.

I hope soon to send you something *quod et hunc in annum vivat, et plures*. My large work opens with the general idea of political liberty; then proceeds to examine the sentiments of the European nations on this head, as distinguished from the almost universal gross despotism of the rest of the world. The third part is a critique on the various governments of Europe. The fourth and last is entirely on the English

constitution; the various changes it has undergone, the improvements made in it by the glorious revolution, and the no less happy than timely accession of the house of Brunswick. There are a few hints of some remedies to the defects still subsisting in this noble, and (if my prayers are heard) this eternal, fabric. A large appendix contains, I hope, a full justification of Mr. Wilkes, upon constitutional grounds. A variety of characters are drawn from the life; which, if I mistake not, will entertain you: and I believe they are not skeletons, though I hope the originals will be so before the book is published.

I have heard that there is a new edition of the North Briton printed, with the *third* volume; either at Amsterdam, Geneva, or Berlin, I forget which *. It is said, there are many additions. The following note was sent

* This is a mistake; there never was any edition of the *third* volume of the North Briton, but that printed by Mr. Wilkes himself, in his own house.

me as a specimen. It is on these words of the Dedication of *Mortimer**: ‘A complete
‘Orthographical Dictionary; to determine
‘the knotty point of *Britain* for *Briton*,
‘which has of late puzzled the great
‘writer, the great Briton himself†, not-
‘withstanding the excellence of his Scottish
‘education.’ The note is on the general
observation, that the king’s speech is
properly the minister’s.—“This,” it says,
“must be allowed to be true, in whatever
light we consider it. The constitution of
England makes the minister answerable for
it to the nation; and common justice tells
every man, that he ought to stand up for
his own works. King William the Third,
however, was an exception to the general
observation. He composed as well as pro-
nounced all the speeches from the throne
in his reign. This example was followed
in part by our present sovereign. My eyes

* See the early part of vol. i. of the present work.

† Dr. Smollett.

glistened with rapture, when I read in the hand of my royal master those endearing words of his first speech, ‘ Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of *Britain!*’ What a true *Icon Basiliké* of his sacred majesty king George the Third, is here in only a single word! The periodical writer called the Briton followed in many places the royal orthography.”

It may be worth while just to remark, that the controversy about speeches from the throne to the lords and commons, seems to have been started in Pope’s time. He says,

And lies to ev’ry lord in ev’ry thing,

Like a king’s favourite—or like a king.

Warburton’s edition, vol. iv. p. 261.

LETTER II.

Paris, Rue des Saints Peres, Feb. 11, 1767.

SIR,

I AM glad of this opportunity, by Brown*, to thank you for the things you sent me; and just to say, that I wrote to you a fortnight ago by the post. If you have not received that letter, let me know as soon as you can; and send to me by ——. Pray, never write by the post. I have only time to wish you a good night†.

* Mr. Wilkes's valet-de-chambre.

† The directions to persons given in this and in the subsequent letters, are purposely omitted, because some of the parties are still living.

acceptance of the inclosed, which I believe you will not disapprove. I shall soon send you some other pieces.

I heartily congratulate you on your recovery; and I desire you to thank Dr. Brocklesby from me, for the services he has done in restoring so good a friend to liberty.

My History of England advances very much*; and I will give it all the perfection my poor abilities can reach. You shall hear from me soon on some interesting subjects.

I am entirely of sentiment with our good friends as to the public. You have been the hero of liberty to the public cause in all their late publications; but perhaps there are some things respecting the Scottish vipers, which you dare not print. They may be too bold, while such a wretch as — is at the head of the king's-bench.

* Mentioned in vol. ii. page 101, of the present work.

If any thing turns up, send me the manuscript, and I will have a few copies printed here, and sent to you from time to time by —. This will be a sure, an easy, and a cheap way. One thing only must be observed: you must not touch on any thing which respects this country, excepting only the last peace. It would be madness in me to cut the branch on which I am obliged to sit and sing. I will undertake to send it correct, if you give me a tolerably fair manuscript. If you want to have a larger work printed, you must then settle it beforehand as to the expence; for, although I have the spirit, I have not the fortune, of Hampden.

I shall always be glad if I can be useful to you; for

I am yours, very sincerely,
JOHN WILKES.

LETTER V.

Paris, Rue des Peres, April 30, 1767.

DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED the large parcel you were so good to send me, and likewise a small one; and your letter of April 14. I am very glad you found out so safe a direction. I shall soon send you several covers directed to me, in which you may put your letters. In the mean time direct to me ———. It is better to get a woman to direct for you, until you receive the covers I shall send. I beg you to write often, and all news of every kind; but never sign your letters. For greater things, send them always by ———; the last came very safe by that direction. Pray, keep these directions carefully.

I sent you several copies of my letter to the duke of Grafton, of which I beg your acceptance, for any of our common friends, who will approve the principle and the spirit of it. I wrote to you at the same time a long letter. I am unalterable in my detestation of the enemies of our friends and country. I wish you to let our friends know how vigorous I think the opposition ought to be, and that I will lend myself to them in every thing.—I can do what I please here as to printing. Send me any pieces, or supply me with materials, and I will work them up. The terrors of — do not reach hither: we only mind a *lieutenant de police*. Not a word about this country. If it was thought necessary, I would come to Calais for some months to conduct any paper; and we might, I believe, even contrive to print it there. I wish to know if you have received my former letter about this.

You do not mention the nature of your monthly publication. I wish you to explain the plan, and I will assist you as far as I can. Pray, write me all news; but never mention that we are correspondents, except as to sending me books.

How are lord Temple and Jemmy Grenville * together? How is Cotes with his lordship? The most minute things are interesting to us here, at so great a distance. You may depend on my secrecy, and pray do not omit any thing curious.

I hope this will find you quite recovered. You must be very careful of yourself in so cold a spring.

* Father of the present lord Glastonbury and general Grenville.

LETTER VI.

Paris, Rue des Saints Peres, May 11, 1767.

DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED the favour of your letter, and the three pamphlets. The letter is dated April 30. I wrote to you a week ago ; addressed to — — —, without any cover. Did you receive that letter ?

I am glad that the public approve my letter to the duke of Grafton : I hope it is an earnest of their favour to a much greater work. As to the reprinting it, perhaps you would better have deferred it till after the rising of parliament *. Is it necessary, in all cases, that your name should be in the title-page ? Cannot you, for your

* Mr. Almon, as bookseller, reprinted it immediately ; but with some retrenchments.

own safety, reprint a thing without your name in the title-page, and get it sold by underlings and hawkers, whom it would be ridiculous to take up and prosecute? You should think of some such scheme, for at present you run great risks.

I think the speaker cannot lay hold of you, as there are not even the initials of his name. The house of lords are more dangerous. They are more tender; though not more sore, nor rotten. I am at your service, to do what you will here in the cause of liberty.

I sent you a dozen of covers for directions to me, by a friend. We are always safe in that way, as well as by our Dover friend. Pray, send me minutely all the news; and all the chit-chat of London, respecting the great folks. I will never shew your letters to any one, nor even say I have heard from you but as a bookseller.

I read your plan of the Political Register with attention, and will assist you in it.

I send you an exact copy of a letter from the king of Poland to madame Geoffrin, for your first number. You may translate in the second, to make the most of so pleasing a curiosity; which is much admired at Paris. Send me the work regularly by —, as usual.

I am, &c. Adieu!

LETTER VII.

Paris, Rue des Peres, May 25, 1767.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE the favour of your letter of the 12th of May, and I thank you for all the intelligence it contains. I shall from time to time assist you in your new work; and the very first friend who goes to England shall bring you —. My next letter shall come to you directed to —.

I would not have you, a family man, run a risk for any party. You have seen

enough of treachery, in your own case as well as mine. I spoke of street-walking publishers, whom it would be ridiculous in government to take up*. We have here a kind of people who go from house to house, and distribute every thing of every kind, in spite of every precaution of government. I should guess that such must in time come among you, as well as here; for your government is every day getting more and more arbitrary.

My History of England has cost me much time and pains. I believe, with you, it will have a great sale; the period is interesting, and it is done with care. As to the copy, what you propose is very just, but I cannot give myself so much trouble. I will give you my ideas on this head. I shall sell the copy of the first volume, which contains the history of England from the Revolution to the accession of the house of Brunswick; a large quarto, almost finished. It is compiled from materials.

* Page 142, above.

(besides the old ones) which no historian has seen : the original letters of foreign ministers to Louis the Fourteenth ; and a journal to the death of James the Second, wrote by himself, which contains a variety of curious anecdotes. I will have six hundred pounds for it ; half now, and the other half on the delivery of the volume in January next. I write this to you only in consequence of what you mention. If you think it will be of service to you, I shall be glad you undertook this rather than any other person. If you and I agree upon this point, I will submit my manuscript to any gentleman of candour and knowledge to revise, that no passage may appear dangerous to you. I do not think, however, there can be a single word libellous in the first volume ; though there may be a great many in the second, which is from the accession of the house of Brunswick to the present time. I have thoughts of a country-house near this place ; that I may entirely attend to

the perfecting this great work, without any dissipation. This will cost me a good deal, therefore I must have three hundred pounds directly; and I would engage to deliver the first volume complete in January, on the payment of three hundred pounds more. I shall take care that my first volume shall make the nation wild for the rest of the work.

I have fully explained my intentions to you as a friend; as well as an honest, worthy, bookseller. Let what I have mentioned remain a secret among ourselves, if you do not accept it; if you do, say nothing of the terms. I can draw on you at any term we fix; and you may advertise, when you will, "In the press," (or any other expression you prefer,) "The History of England; from the Revolution, to the End of the fourth Year of King George the Third. By John Wilkes, Esq. In three Volumes, quarto. The first volume, from the Revolution to the acces-

sion of the House of Brunswick, will be published the beginning of next year."

I believe this will answer all the purposes you mention, with respect to the purchasers of Hume and Rapin.

LETTER VIII.

Paris, Rue des Saints Peres, May 28, 1767.

DEAR SIR,

YESTERDAY I received ——. I thank you for your care and attention. I sent you yesterday interesting extracts from the remonstrances of the parliaments of this kingdom. Did you receive them? I printed only twenty copies, when I was at Geneva; and nobody has them.

I wish you to write often.

LETTER IX.

Paris, Rue des Saints Peres, June 22, 1767.

YOUR letter of the 12th of June arrived here, my dear sir, on the 17th. I am obliged to you for all the particulars in it. I am sorry that the Remonstrances are not yet come to your hand. They are exceedingly curious; full of manly eloquence, and there is not enough to tire. Have any of my friends given you the Notes on the Dedication to the Bishop of Gloucester*?

I send you two French pieces, very remarkable. Neither has been printed: the second is by Voltaire. A friend of mine is soon going to London, and shall bring you a complete collection of all our treaties with the king of Prussia, with the secret and separate articles, in the original French. The public will rejoice at this acquisition, and I will give you a short

* Page 65, above.

letter about our breach of faith with the Prussian monarch. You must contrive to squeeze all this as well as you can into one number of the Political Register, that the public may have the whole of our connexions with Prussia in the same point of view.

The verses I enclose are very good. They are the production of the count de Lauraguais, who was a good while in England. They were never printed.—Make your Register interesting to the French, who are in great numbers at London.

You are a bad man for a plot; to give a direction where a letter should be sent, and not provide against your friend's being out of town, and for the letters being sent to you or taken up in his absence. Some person should be chosen who has no other letters from Paris; and then there can be no mistake. You are a careless, good-humoured

fellow; and shall never be hanged, though *a friend of yours* may*.

I hear from London that lord Lyttelton has received from Sandby and Dodsley three thousand pounds for his History of Henry II. which is in two small quartos, The period is not very interesting, except to a Frenchman, from the story of Becket, and the late disputes of the clergy here, which are now at an end. You see therefore you are mistaken, when you say that five hundred guineas are more than ever were given for such a volume. The period is interesting; and I promise you my work shall be so. I have told you what I mean to have directly. If you accept, send me any paper which I may sign for the delivery of the manuscripts on or before the 1st of January; and I shall draw on you for three hundred pounds in one or two months, from the day I sign the paper you send. We can

* A jocular allusion of Mr. Wilkes to his own case.

1) The following extracts are extremely curious. They were made with much care and the utmost fidelity by a gentleman, who seems to have preserv'd the spirit of English liberty, in a land of singing and of dancing slaves. They prove two political points of importance. The first is, that France was reduc'd to the greatest distress before the infamous Peace of Paris in ~~1763~~ 1763. This is shown not from the exceptionable writings of private persons, but from the testimony of public bodies from these Remonstrances of the various Parliaments of that kingdom. The second is that these remonstrances are less respectfull, both as to the matter and the mode of expression than the writings of ^{any} political authors in England yet these were presented to the Sovereign, publish'd to the nation by order of the respective courts of Justice, and met with very general approbation. In England more freedom in these points shou'd be allow'd, from the nature of the government, and because such writings never directly reach the throne. The press seems indeed the only way, by which a prince, who wishes to know the truth, can ever discover the real sentiments of his people at large with respect to his government and his Ministers.

manage this privately, and no one but a banker here know it.

I am impatient for the letter you promise me, of news and politics.

LETTER X.

[The French Remonstrances, mentioned so emphatically in the two preceding letters, were prefaced by Mr. Wilkes (with a just propriety, and a feeling natural in him, who was smarting under the severity of a government that was at that time precisely the reverse of the French) in these words:]

THE following Extracts are extremely curious. They were made with much care, and the utmost fidelity, by a gentleman who seems to have preserved the spirit of English liberty in a land of singing and dancing slaves. They prove two political points of importance.—The first is, that

France was reduced to the greatest distress before the infamous peace of Paris in 1763. This is shewn, not from the exceptionable writings of private persons, but from the testimony of public bodies, from the Remonstrances of the various parliaments of that kingdom.—The second is, that these remonstrances are less respectful, both as to the matter and the mode of expression, than the writings of any political authors in England. Yet these were presented to the sovereign, published to the nation by order of the respective courts of justice, and met with very general approbation. In England more freedom in these points should be allowed, from the nature of the government, and because such writings never directly reach the throne. The press seems indeed the only way by which a prince who wishes to know the truth, can ever discover the real sentiments of his people at large, with respect to his government and his ministers.

*From the Remonstrance of the Parliament
of Paris, of the 29th of May, 1763.*

“The depopulation of the country evidently proves, that the extraordinary efforts which the said lord the king has exacted by the interposition of his absolute authority, have exhausted all resources.”

“The gradual wasting of the kingdom, the sensible diminution of the number of its inhabitants, the decline of agriculture, the desertion which leaves one part of France fallow, the encrease of beggars, the discouragement spread over country labourers, the terror with which the idea alone of the improvement of their lands inspires the cultivators; all these circumstances, which are so many facts, denote an universal ruin.”

*From another Remonstrance, of June
18th, 1763.*

“One need only go out of the capital, to perceive nothing but ruin; traces of emigration, and misery and weakness in those

who remain : we every day see wretches, who, in order to pay the taxes, are obliged to sell their corn, their cattle, and even their utensils."

"The project for the liquidation of the national debt, in many articles, brings in question the justice of the said lord the king, the faith of his engagements, the subsistence of his subjects; and continues to break the important spring of public confidence."

*From another Remonstrance of August
27th, 1763.*

"The continuance of the *don gratuit* [free gift], contrary to your majesty's positive engagements, by occasioning a distrust of your royal word, will expose it for ever to a discredit which the necessity urged cannot excuse."

*From another Remonstrance, of December
17th, 1763.*

"The parliament has a right to carry to the said lord the king its just complaints.

of an administration, which, for almost a year past, has only opposed to the public misfortunes acts the most likely to hasten the ruin of the state. Whatever the supreme be, which the said lord the king fully possesses, it is not above the laws of the state."

"All has been surprised; the rights of the public, the security of the courts of justice, the honour of the magistracy, the dignity of the throne itself."

From the Remonstrance of the Supreme Council of Roussillon, August 16, 1763.

"The deplorable situation of the people, the truly affecting sight of the misery of your people, the piercing cries of wretchedness, have no need of exaggeration or false colouring, to touch the paternal heart of our lord the king."

From the Remonstrance of the Parliament of Paris, of 17th August, 1763.

"They were, from that time, exhausted; and the efforts which the most lively con-

cern for your majesty's glory, and for the welfare of the state, made them exert, have since that time drained them to the utmost."

"The cattle necessary for tillage, the utensils of agriculture, their clothing, the most valuable parts of their patrimonies, the commodities most necessary to their subsistence; all has been disposed of, for the payment of the immense arrear of the twentieth-penny, and the taxes of the year. The money is entirely exhausted."

From the Remonstrance of the Parliament of Dauphiny, of 17th August, 1763.

"The two twentieths" [tributes unknown in the happier days of this monarchy, and which announce its fall] "the retrenchment of which this time of peace seems to demand, annihilate the faith of promises, and destroy public confidence."

"——— to conceal, if possible, from the knowledge of your people, this crying profusion, which degrades the ma-

jesty of the throne and the dignity of the nation."

"The inability of the people will put a stop to this inundation of taxes, and the impossibility of their being levied will justify the melancholy truths which the cries of misery and indigence have not been able to carry to your ears."

"——— to elude the effects of your promises, and disgrace the honour of the throne."

"Lands uncultivated, and habitations deserted, proclaim the emigration of a multitude of wretches, driven from their paternal inheritances by the rigour of taxes."

"The husbandman ruined, deprived of the fruits of his labour, pierced by the cries and lamentations of his children, overwhelmed with the horrors of famine, curses the hour of their birth, and detests a tie, the fecundity of which still confines him to his country. The pale inhabitants struggle against hunger, thirst, and na-

kedness; the seasons, by their change, only augment their sufferings; their dark retreats are hardly sufficient to hide their shame, their want, and their despair."

From the Remonstrance of the Court of Aids, Clermont Ferraud, 13th September, 1763.

"Wretchedness infallibly causes depopulation; and this sad cause exists at present in your kingdom, and encreases daily."

From the Remonstrance of the Parliament of Toulouse, of 22nd December, 1763.

"Your subjects sow not but in tears; and with groans alone reap fruits, which, alas! are not for them."

"——— orders, into which your justice has been surprised."

"There is not one of them, which is not a precious monument of that ancient national liberty, on the ruins of which attempts have been made, this long time, to raise the brittle Colossus of absolute power."

*From the Arret of the Parliament of Rouen,
of 16th November, 1763.*

“This sacred right is openly violated, in all its parts, by a train of unexpected attacks, made on the religion of our lord the king; against the interest of his glory and of the state; against the happiness of the nation, and the justice due to it, which the said lord the king has sworn to observe inviolably.”

*From the Arret of the Parliament of Dijon,
of 15th December, 1763.*

“—— That the French nation, whose name alone* proclaims the liberty which is natural to it, is subjected to a monarchical government, only to be ruled according to its own laws and customs, whose connexions and union form at once the firmest support of the throne and monarchy, and the security of the prince and people.”

* Nation of the Franks, or Freemen.

*From the Remonstrance of the Court of
Aids of Montauban, of 3d March,
1763.*

“ We will spare, sire, the natural goodness of your heart, the affecting picture of the misery which afflicts this province. Ah, sire ! ‘ a perpetual sinking fund !’ What a fatal word are you prevailed upon to pronounce !”

LETTER XI.

Paris, Rue des Saints Peres, July 13, 1767.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE the favour of your letter of the 3d. A very worthy friend of mine, Dr. Gem, is set out to day for England, and carries with him the Prussian treaties, &c. *

* These treaties were all printed in Mr. Almon's collection of treaties.

I have a little house near Paris, in a sweet situation; and I give five days a-week to my History. You may have a part of it when you will; but the longer you leave it here, the more perfect it will be.

I have only time to tell you that my next letter will be to —.

Dear Sir, Adieu!

I have sent my brother the agreement &c. about the History.

The Agreement for the History.

“ Paris, July 13, 1767.

“ I do hereby engage myself to Mr. J. Almon, bookseller, in Piccadilly, London, for the first volume of my History of England, from the Revolution to the Accession of the House of Brunswick, on the following conditions.

“ Mr. Almon shall accept and pay my bill of this day’s date, drawn in favour of Mr. Heaton Wilkes due on the 1st day of next September. He shall pay 100l. to my order on the 1st day of next October, and 300l. on the 2d day of January 1768, likewise to my order. I engage to send to Mr. Almon a part of the manuscript on the 1st of next September; and the whole of the copy, complete, by the 2d of January 1768. I shall be entitled to copies of the first volume, for the subscribers to the ‘Proceedings of the Administration against Mr. Wilkes,’ at the booksellers’ price.”

“ JOHN WILKES.”

The Bills.

‘ £.200.

‘ Paris, July 13, 1767.

‘ ON the first day of September next, pay
‘ to Mr. Heaton Wilkes, or his order, the

‘sum of two hundred pounds; and you will
‘oblige your humble servant,

‘JOHN WILKES.’

‘To Mr. J. Almon, booksel-
‘ler, opposite to Burlington-
‘house, Piccadilly, London.’

Indorsed on the back,

‘Received the contents.

‘Witness, H. WILKES.’

‘£.100.

‘August 27, 1767.

‘ON the first of October, pay to Mr.
‘Heaton Wilkes, or his order, the sum of
‘one hundred pounds; and place it to the
‘account of,

‘Sir, your humble servant,

‘JOHN WILKES.’

‘To Mr. J. Almon, opposite
‘to Burlington - house,
‘Piccadilly, London.’

Indorsed on the back,

‘Received the contents.

‘Witness, H. WILKES.’

LETTER XII.

Paris, July 30, 1767.

DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED the favour of your letter of the 20th. I enclose you two Italian sonnets, which have never been printed, and are truly good.

I lose no time in finishing the first volume of my History. I will make it as perfect as I can here, for both our sakes. I know how much my own reputation, and that of the work, depends on the merit of the first volume.

If the political change you mention takes place, I should naturally imagine that the very idea of a "general comprehensive system" must include me, my pardon, my return, an indemnity, &c. In such a case, I could correct the press myself; and you, who are yourself an author,

know the advantages of that to any work. I will write to Mr. Fitzherbert as soon as I find the arrangement you mention takes place. I hope that I shall not be forgot, though, so long absent.

LETTER XIII.

Paris, Rue des Saints Peres, Aug. 13, 1767.

I HAVE the favour, dear sir, of yours of the 29th of July. I thank you for your account of the late negotiation. I would have you print it, by all means; it will please the public, and those truths should be told *.

I observe, that you advertise the observations † as mine. I never owned that pamphlet. You should state therefore to

* It was printed in the Political Register; and afterwards, with additions, in the *Anecdotes of the Life of Lord Chatham*.

† On the Spanish papers.

the public, that it is *believed* to be Mr. Wilkes's.—I hope you will print the Letter to the Electors of Aylesbury, and the two to the Duke of Grafton; but, for your own safety, do not let your name appear*.

LETTER XIV.

Paris, Rue des Saints Peres, Aug. 28, 1767.

DEAR SIR,

I HOPE this will come to your hands time enough to insert the two letters

* Mr. Almon printed the Letter to the Electors of Aylesbury, and those to the Duke of Grafton; but with several retrenchments, which prudence at that time made necessary. They are printed in this volume, from Mr. Wilkes's last corrected copies. The Letter to the Electors of Aylesbury follows Mr. Wilkes's Notes on Churchill's poems; and the Letters to the Duke of Grafton are under the head of "Mr. Wilkes's Second Return to England," (page 171, below.)

which passed between Mr. Douglas * and myself, relative to the Observations †. They are curious, and will amuse ‡.

I am in daily expectation of receiving from Mr. Rice what he promises me relating to my History ; which, he says, is so important and curious, that he wishes me to see it before I finish. It is your interest and mine to have the work as perfect as we can ; and therefore I only send you the Introduction, until I have examined the pieces he is to send. You will, I hope, approve the Introduction. I believe it will much please ; because the English here to whom I have read it, are high in their commendations. I wish to see the proof sheets : you, who are a good author, know the importance of correcting one's self the proof-sheets—how much a work gains by

* Now Dr. Douglas, bishop of Salisbury.

† On the Spanish papers.

‡ They are included in the Life of Mr. Wilkes, in the first volume of this work.

it. If you had at any time a small thing to send, you might venture it by the post, directed —; and the inside, on the proof-sheet, &c. —: but this seldom, and only small parcels.

When you reprint the Observations, you should likewise reprint the two Monitors relative to the same subject, although I am not the author of them. They explain what passed in the house of lords on this occasion *.

You may likewise reprint, from the third volume of the North Briton, the Dedication to Mortimer. If you do, I will send you two or three curious notes †.

You booksellers live always in a state of jeopardy; like soldiers fighting for their country. Do you take care of the letters of your friends? You should, from time

* This has been done, in the present work.

† It is printed in the last volume of this work, with the additional notes.

to time, send to some friend's house such letters as these. You never can trust any ministers in our country. The whigs in power turn tories; though, alas! the tories do not turn whigs.

My History becomes my daily amusement. I have a mind, in a short letter, to tell the man from Wales in the Public Advertiser some time ago, that I value my reputation for veracity beyond the paltry fame of being an elegant writer; "that I scorn even *hazarding* a falsehood; and that I believe my History is so faithful, it will please no man of any party, but every man of no party, &c. &c." Perhaps this will be right, perhaps not: perhaps a paragraph from a third person would be better. Adieu!

LETTER XV.

Paris, Rue des Saints Peres, Oct. 15, 1767.

I THANK you, my dear sir, for your letter of October 3d. I before acknowledged your favour by Dr. Gem. I am very glad that you approve the Introduction. I wish you to send me the proofs as soon as you can: I have a little addition or two to make. Let me have two or three proofs, if you send by ——. I shall send you, by —, two or three notes for Mortimer *, which should be printed from the third volume of the North Briton, which was never published, but which you have. There are a few alterations.

I will soon look out for some things for you. The notes on the Dedication to the Bishop of Gloucester I printed at Naples†.

* The Dedication of the Fall of Mortimer.

† See page 65 of this volume. Only twelve copies of the Notes were printed at Naples.

This is the last letter which Mr. Wilkes wrote to Mr. Almon from France.

MR. WILKES'S SECOND RETURN
TO ENGLAND.

IN July 1766 there was another change of the ministry in England. The marquis of Rockingham's party were removed; and a new administration was appointed, according to an arrangement made under the auspices of the earl of Chatham, with the duke of Grafton at the head of the treasury. This circumstance Mr. Wilkes thought favourable to his affairs, because the duke had supported his cause in all the late proceedings.

Lord Southampton (then colonel Fitzroy) was at that time at Paris, and Mr. Wilkes had several interviews with him. Lord Southampton assured Mr. Wilkes, that he had it in charge from his brother* to inform Mr. Wilkes, that he would find in him a real and sincere

* The duke of Grafton.

friend, extremely desirous to concur in doing him justice ; but that many of the particulars could not be communicated by the post.

Every man of common sense must have construed this into a fair invitation to return to England. Mr. Wilkes thought it such ; and, under the influence of this opinion, he quitted Paris on the 22d of October, 1766, and set out for London. He left his daughter at Paris, with her friends ; but, ever attentive to her ease and comfort, he sent the following letters to her during his absence.

“ Souchet *, Saturday night, Oct. 25, 1766.

“ I WROTE to my dearest girl last night from Senlis : after which I got into my post chaise, and travelled on to this place, where I intend to lie ; and, I believe, I

* A small town in Artois, a short post north-west of Arras.

shall be able to reach Calais to-morrow evening. I intended to have gone to Bethune: but, as that is a *ville de guerre*, I should be kept a good while at the gates; and I prefer a dirty dismal dark inn to waiting half the night in the cold.

I hear nothing on the road except of swarms of Englishmen returning to their country; but I have not met any body, and I hope I shall not till I embark,—that I may sacrifice to ‘nature’s best nurse,’ sleep; a sacrifice of which my cold stands in great need.

I wish to hear from you by every post: the half line, that you are well and love me, I prefer to every thing else I can read. I give you a good example of a correspondent as punctual, though not so entertaining, as you.

I cheapened a pig, at the post-house at Arras, of five months old, and was asked only eighteen sols*. I think famine is a

* Nine-pence sterling.

good way off, to judge by the capital of Artois.

Pray, remember my services to Mr. and miss Davidson, Suard, the baron, and baronne. Good night, dearest daughter!

Ever your affectionate father,

JOHN WILKES.

Sittingbourne, Wednesday, Oct. 29, 1766.

MY DEAREST POLLY,

I WROTE you a few lines on my arrival at Dover, which I sent by a private hand. I have now, by the bye-post, an opportunity of just saying that I am well, though more fatigued than I ever remember to have been. I passed all Monday night on the deck, sick almost to death; and not able to go down to the cabin, from the intolerable stench of the bulge, or confined water. I got a comfortable bed here last night, and slept well the twelve hours round.

I am impatient to hear, from my fair correspondent at Paris, how you do. I shall write to you all the time of my absence, under abbé Arnaud's cover.—Have you yet seen Vespasiano? I wrote a line to Suard about the bargain to be made with him.—I hope shortly to hear you read gracefully the Italian, which is certainly the best of all modern tongues for a lady's conversation. We will soon try who translates best into French some chosen Italian pieces.

I shall be too late in town for the post till Friday: then I shall let you know all particulars, the great and the small; as well as that I am,

my dear daughter,

your affectionate father,

JOHN WILKES.

My respects to madame Martinet.

London, Nov. 4, 1766.

I AM here, my dear girl, in daily expectation of having a final answer from the duke of Grafton, which will fix the day of my return to you. I wish that I could, before this, have told you the hour when I shall come to see you ; but I suppose I may be on the road to Paris before you may hear again of me. Some of the important persons in this business have been out of town ; but, I believe, this evening they will be assembled.

I have wrote a line to Mr. Vanden Yver, with a bill I got here, to pay you twenty louis. You have only to take the money when he sends it ; and to give him a receipt or a draft, as he chooses : I have paid the money here. I beg you not to restrain yourself in any pleasure or convenience. I will ever contrive as nobly for you as I can.

The weather here is very fine ; but we have cold frosty nights. The parliament certainly meets the 11th. Lord Temple, it is thought, goes into opposition. He is expected this evening in Pall Mall.—Mr. Cotes is just returned from Dunkirk. I hope we shall settle our affairs to-morrow or Thursday.

There are many obliging inquiries after you here. I beg you to remember me to your good friends in the *rue royale*. I hope you often call on them. My best respects to Mr. and miss Davidson, madame Chantereine, &c.—Good night, dearest Polly! Keep always a warm corner in your heart for

your affectionate father,

JOHN WILKES.

MR. WILKES'S FIRST LETTER TO THE
DUKE OF GRAFTON.

As soon as Mr. Wilkes arrived in London, he saw Mr. Cotes, Mr. Fitzherbert, and others of his friends. This last gentleman immediately acquainted the duke of Grafton with his arrival: and as his grace did not seem to be offended by this information, it was thought the most advisable that Mr. Wilkes should write to him; and Mr. Fitzherbert undertook to deliver the letter, of which the following is a copy.

*To the Duke of Grafton, first Commissioner
of his Majesty's Treasury.*

“ London, Nov. 1, 1766.

“ MY LORD,

“ It is a very peculiar satisfaction I feel, on my return to my native country, that a nobleman of your grace's superior talents, and inflexible integrity, is at the head of the most important department of the state. I have been witness of the general

applause which has been given abroad to the choice his majesty has made; and I am happy to find my own countrymen zealous and unanimous in every testimony of their approbation.

“ I hope, my lord, that I may congratulate myself, as well as my country, on your grace's being placed in a station of so great power and importance. Though I have been cut off from the body of his majesty's subjects by a cruel and unjust proscription, I have never entertained an idea inconsistent with the duty of a good subject. My heart still retains all its former warmth for the dignity of England, and the glory of its sovereign. I have not associated with the traitors to our liberties, nor made a single connection with any man who was dangerous, or even suspected by the friends of the protestant family on the throne. I now hope that the rigour of a long unmerited exile is past; and that I may be allowed to continue in the land, and among the friends, of liberty.

“ I wish, my lord, to owe this to the

mercy of my prince. I entreat your grace to lay me with all humility at the king's feet: with the truest assurances that I have never, in any moment of my life, swerved from the duty and allegiance I owe to my sovereign; and that I implore, and in every thing submit to, his majesty's clemency.

“Your grace's noble manner of thinking; and the obligations I have formerly received, which are still fresh in my mind; will, I hope, give a full propriety to this address: and, I am sure, a heart glowing with the sacred zeal of liberty, must have a favourable reception from the duke of Grafton. I flatter myself that my conduct will justify your grace's interceding with a prince who is distinguished by a compassionate tenderness and goodness to all his subjects.

“I am, with the truest respect,
my lord,

your grace's most obedient,
and most humble servant,

JOHN WILKES.”

SECOND LETTER TO THE DUKE OF
GRAFTON.

WHAT had happened, or who had been with the duke after Mr. Fitzherbert's interview with his grace, cannot be ascertained: but there was certainly some change wrought in the duke's sentiments on this subject during the interval; for the only answer Mr. Wilkes received to his letter was a verbal one — “ that Mr. Wilkes must apply to lord Chatham; that the duke of Grafton did nothing without the concurrence of lord Chatham.”

It must be recollected, that when this new ministry was formed, lord Temple and lord Chatham differed very much upon the nomination for places: it was a violent breach; a dissolution of all former friendships between them. Mr. Wilkes adhered firmly to lord Temple; consequently he on the present occasion refused to apply to lord Chatham. Here the matter ended.

Some time afterwards, lord Temple expressed his approbation of Mr. Wilkés's refusal : because he thought lord Chatham would have given him a negative, or perhaps a notice to quit the kingdom ; which would have mortified Mr. Wilkes still more than the duke of Grafton's reference.

Mr. Wilkes, being thus convinced that this new ministry were not less unfavourable to him than the former had been, resolved to return to Paris. His friends saw with concern the necessity he was under of taking that resolution. There was, however, no alternative, but that of staying in England, perhaps in a prison.

When he arrived at Paris, he began to reflect on his situation ; and the anguish he felt in the disappointment of his hopes, is not to be described. He often said, it was the bitterest he ever suffered : all the passions inspired by grief, rage, vexation, and resentment, rankling and corroding in his breast, his mental state was in the

most painful commotion. No wonder that he sought relief in any possible resource from these violent agitations.

He was accordingly not long in resolving to give vent to his feelings, by writing a severe letter to the duke of Grafton; in which too the earl of Chatham was not spared. He accused them both of being the tools of lord Bute. In this assertion he was totally mistaken; but it was the illusion of the moment, and was shared by him in common with a great part of the nation: with the earl of Bute these two noblemen had not the least connection; no correspondence of counsels, no communication of opinions.—In this letter Mr. Wilkes stated his case. No doubt, it was some relief to him, that in his sorrows he could find a resource in his pen. It is a consolation to the afflicted to repose the cause of their trouble in the breast of another; in cases of national interest, it is perhaps more satisfactory to extend it to the public.

The letter being too long to be inserted in the newspapers, it was printed as a pamphlet, both at London and Paris. The London edition was mutilated, by the caution of the publisher; but Mr. Wilkes afterwards caused a complete and corrected edition to be printed at Berlin, from which the following copy is taken. The original is in the publisher's hands, for any gentleman's inspection.

To his Grace the Duke of Grafton, first Commissioner of his Majesty's Treasury.

‘ Vacare culpâ magnum est solatium: præsertim
 ‘ cùm habeam duas res quibus me sustentem;—op-
 ‘ timarum artium scientiam, & maximarum rerum
 ‘ gloriam,—quarum altera mihi vivo nunquam eri-
 ‘ pietur, altera ne mortuo quidem.’ CICERO.

“ Paris, Dec. 12, 1767.

“ MY LORD,

“ I AM not yet recovered from the astonishment into which I was thrown by your grace's verbal message in answer to my

letter of the 1st of November. In a conversation I had with colonel Fitzroy at the hotel d'Espagne, he did me the honour of assuring me that I should find his brother my real and sincere friend, extremely desirous to concur in doing me justice, that he was to tell me this from your grace, but that many interesting particulars relative to me could not be communicated by letter, nor by the post*. I fondly believed these obliging assurances; because on a variety of occasions your grace had testified a full approbation of my conduct, had thanked me in the most flattering terms as the person most useful to the common cause in which we were embarked, and had shewn an uncommon zeal to serve a man who had suffered so much in the cause of liberty.

“I returned to England with the gayest and the most lively hopes. As soon as I arrived at London, I desired my excellent

* As stated in page 171, above.

friend Mr. Fitzherbert to wait on your grace, with every profession of regard on my part, and the resolution I had taken of entirely submitting to you the mode of the application I should make to the throne for my pardon. I cannot express the anxiety which your grace's answer gave me,—‘ Mr. Wilkes must write to lord Chatham.’ I then begged Mr. Fitzherbert to state the reasons which made it impossible for me to follow that advice ; from every principle of honour, both public and private. I shewed too the impropriety of supplicating a fellow-subject for mercy ; the prerogative which good kings are the most jealous of, by far the brightest jewel in their crown, and the attribute by which they may the nearest approach to the divinity.

“ I afterwards wrote the letter to your grace which I have seen in all the public prints. I never received any other answer than a verbal message,—‘ Mr. Wilkes must write to lord Chatham: I do nothing without lord Chatham.’ When I found that my

pardon was to be bought with the sacrifice of my honour ; I had the virtue not to hesitate. I spurned at the proposal ; and left my dear native London with a heart full of grief that my fairest hopes were blasted,—of humiliation that I had given an easy faith to the promises of a minister and a courtier,—and of astonishment that a nobleman of parts and discernment could continue in an infatuation from which the conduct of lord Chatham had recovered every other man in the nation.—He was indeed long the favourite character of our countrymen. Every tongue was wanton in his praise. The whole people lavished on him their choicest favours ; and endeavoured by the noblest means, by an unbounded generosity and confidence, to keep him virtuous. With what anguish were we at last undeceived ! how much it cost us to give up a man who had so long and entirely kept possession of our hearts ! how cruel was the struggle ! But, alas ! how is he changed ! how fallen,

‘ from what height fallen !’ his glorious sun is set ; I believe, never to rise again.

“ We long hoped, my lord, that public virtue was the guide of his actions, and the love of our country his ruling passion ; but he has fully shewn *omnis vis virtusque in linguâ sita est*. Our hearts glowed with gratitude for the important services he had done against the common enemy ; and the voice of the nation hailed him our deliverer : but private ambition was, all the while, skulking behind the shield of the patriot ; and at length, in an evil hour, made him quit the scene of all his glory, the only place in which he could be truly useful, for a retreat where he knew it was impossible the confidence of the people could follow, but where he might in inglorious ease ‘ bear his *blushing* honours thick upon him.’

“ I might now, my lord, expostulate with your grace on a verbal message, and of such a nature, in answer to a letter couched in the most decent and respectful terms,

coming too from a late member of the legislature. I might regret that the largest proffers of friendship, and real service, could mean no more than two or three words of cold advice that I should apply to another. I might be tempted to think it a duty of office in the first lord of the treasury, to have submitted to his majesty a petition relative to the exercise of the noblest act of regal power which any constitution can give any sovereign. Surely, my lord, my application to the first commissioner of the treasury, who is always considered as the first minister in England, was the very proper application. As I had made no discovery of any new wonderful pill or drop, nor pretended to the secret of curing the gout or the tooth-ache, I never thought of soliciting lord Chatham for a privy-seal *. His lordship's office was neither important, nor responsible. I will not, however, enlarge on this: but I shall desire your grace's permission to state fully

* Lord Chatham was at that time lord-privy-seal.

what has happened to me as a private gentleman relative to lord Chatham; because I would not leave a doubt concerning the propriety of my conduct, in a mind naturally so candid and so capable of judging truly as that of the duke of Grafton.

“ I believe that the flinty heart of lord Chatham has known the sweets of private friendship, and the fine feelings of humanity, as little as even lord Mansfield. They are both formed to be admired, not beloved. A proud, insolent, overbearing, ambitious man, is always full of the ideas of his own importance, and vainly imagines himself superior to the equality necessary among real friends in all the moments of true enjoyment. Friendship is too pure a pleasure for a mind cankered with ambition, or the lust of power and grandeur. Lord Chatham declared in parliament the strongest attachment to lord Temple, one of the greatest characters our country could ever boast; and said he would live and die

with his noble brother. He has received obligations of the first magnitude from that noble brother : yet what trace of gratitude or of friendship was ever found in any part of his conduct ? and has he not now declared the most open variance, and even hostility ? I have had as warm and express declarations of regard as could be made by this marble-hearted friend : and Mr. Pitt had, no doubt, his views in even feeding me with flattery from time to time ; on occasions too where candour and indulgence were all I could claim. He may remember the compliments he paid me on two certain poems in the year 1754.

“ If I were to take the declarations made by himself and the late Mr. Potter *à la lettre*, they were more charmed with those verses after the ninety-ninth reading than after the first ; so that from this circumstance, as well as a few of his speeches in parliament, it seems to be likewise true of the first orator, or rather the first come-

dian, of our age, *non displicuisse illi jocos, sed non contigisse.*

“I will now submit to your grace, whether there was not something peculiarly base and perfidious in Mr. Pitt’s calling me ‘a blasphemer of my god’ for those very verses,—and at a time when I was absent, and dangerously ill from an affair of honour. The charge too he knew was false; for the whole ridicule of those two pieces was confined to certain mysteries which formerly the unplaced and unpensioned Mr. Pitt did not think himself obliged even to affect to believe. He added another charge equally unjust, that I was ‘the libeller of my king;’ though he was sensible that I never wrote a single line disrespectful to the sacred person of my sovereign, but had only attacked the despotism of his ministers with the spirit becoming a good subject and a zealous friend of his country. The reason of this perfidy was plain. He was then beginning to pay homage to the Scottish

idol, and I was the most acceptable sacrifice he could offer at the shrine of Bute. —History scarcely gives so remarkable a change. He was a few years ago the mad, seditious, tribune of the people, insulting his sovereign even in his capital city : now he is the abject, crouching, deputy of the proud Scot whom he declared in parliament to want wisdom, and hold principles incompatible with freedom ; a most ridiculous character surely for a statesman and the subject of a free kingdom, but the very proper composition for a favourite.—Was it possible for me after this to write a suppliant letter to lord Chatham? I am the first to pronounce myself most unworthy of a pardon, if I could have obtained it on those terms.

“ Although I declare, my lord, that the conscious pride of virtue makes me look down with contempt on a man who could be guilty of this baseness ; who could in the lobby declare that I must be supported, and in the house on the same day desert

and revile me ; yet I will on every occasion do justice to the minister. He has served the public in all those points where the good of the nation coincided with his own private views ; and in no other. I venerate the memory of the secretary ; and I think it an honour to myself that I steadily supported in parliament an administration the most successful we ever had, and which carried the glory of the nation to the highest pitch in every part of the world.— He found his country almost in despair. He raised the noble spirit of England, and strained every nerve against our enemies. His plans, when in power, were always great, though in direct opposition to the declarations of his whole life when out of power. The invincible bravery of the British troops gave success even to the most rash, the most extravagant, the most desperate, of his projects. He saw early the hostile intentions of Spain ; and if the Written Advice had been followed, a very few weeks had then probably closed the last

general war; although the merit of that advice was more the merit of his noble brother, than his own. After the omnipotence of lord Bute, in 1761, had forced Mr. Pitt to retire from his majesty's councils, and the cause was declared by himself to be our conduct relative to Spain, I had the happiness of setting that affair in so clear and advantageous a light, that he expressed the most entire satisfaction, and particular obligations to my friendship. I do not, however, make this a claim of merit to Mr. Pitt; it was my duty, from the peculiar advantages of information which I then had.

“The constitution of our country has no obligations to him. He has left it with all its beauties, and with all its blemishes. He never once appeared in earnest about any question of liberty. He was the cause that in 1764 no point was gained for the public in the two great questions of general warrants and the seizure of papers. That cursed relick of the court of star-chamber, the enormous power of the attorney-

general—the sole great judicial officer of the crown ; who is *durante bene placito*, and not upon oath ; who tramples on grand-juries, and breaks down the first, the foremost barriers of liberty—continued during his administration the same as before. Every grievance which was not rooted out by the glorious Revolution, or by the later struggles of our patriots, still subsists in full force, notwithstanding the absolute power which he exercised for several years over every department of the state.—But I have done with lord Chatham. I leave him to the poor consolation of a place, a pension, and a peerage, for which he has sold the confidence of a great nation. Pity shall find, and weep over, him.

“ I am now, my lord, once more driven from the Romans to the gay, the polite Athenians : but I shall endeavour to convince your grace that I am not totally lost to my country, nor to myself, in this scene of elegant dissipation ; and that I do not waste the time in unavailing complaints of my hard fate, and the ingratitude of those

whom I have served with success: for I shall very soon beg to call the public attention to some points of national importance; and in the mean time shall embrace this opportunity of doing myself justice against the calumnies which a restless faction ceases not to propagate.

“ The affairs of the general warrant, and the habeas-corpus, are told very unfaithfully; and almost every particular relative to my being made a prisoner, and sent to the Tower on the 30th of April, 1763, has been injuriously misrepresented; in several late publications. I shall therefore state the transactions of that memorable day; and I may appeal to the minutes taken at the time for the accuracy of this relation.

“ On my return from the city early in the morning, I met at the end of Great George-street one of the king’s messengers. He told me that he had a warrant to apprehend me, which he must execute immediately;

and that I must attend him to lord Halifax. I desired to see the warrant. He said, it was against 'the authors, printers, and publishers, of the North Briton, N^o 45;' and that his verbal orders were, to arrest Mr. Wilkes. I told him, the warrant did not respect me. I advised him to be very civil, and to use no violence in the street: for if he attempted force, I would put him to death in the instant; but if he would come quietly to my house, I would convince him of the illegality of the warrant, and the injustice of the orders which he had received. He chose to accompany me home, and then produced the general warrant. I declared that such a warrant was absolutely illegal, and void in itself; that it was a ridiculous warrant against the whole English nation; and I asked why he would serve it on me, rather than on the lord-chancellor, on either of the secretaries, on lord Bute, or lord Corke my next-door neighbour. The answer was,

‘I am to arrest Mr. Wilkes.’—About an hour afterwards two other messengers arrived, and several of their assistants. They all endeavoured in vain to persuade me to accompany them to lord Halifax. I had likewise many civil messages from his lordship, to desire my attendance: to which my only answer was, that I had not the honour of visiting his lordship, and this first application was rather rude and ungentle manlike.

“While some of the messengers and their assistants were with me, Mr. Churchill came into the room. I had heard that their verbal orders were likewise to apprehend him, but I suspected they did not know his person; and, by presence of mind, I had the happiness of saving my friend. As soon as Mr. Churchill entered the room, I accosted him, ‘Good morrow, Mr. Thomson. How does Mr. Thomson do to-day? Does she dine in the country?’ Mr. Churchill thanked

me, said she then waited for him, that he only came for a moment to ask me how I did ; and almost directly took his leave. He went home immediately, secured all his papers, and retired into the country. The messengers could never get intelligence where he was. The following week he came to town, and was present both the days of hearing at the court of common-pleas.

“ The whole morning passed in messages between lord Halifax and me. The business of the messengers being soon publicly known, several of my friends came to me on so extraordinary an event. I desired two or three of them to go to the court of common-pleas, to make affidavit of my being made a prisoner in my own house under an illegal warrant, and to demand the habeas-corpus. The chief-justice gave orders that it should issue immediately.

“ A constable came afterwards with several assistants to the messengers. I repeatedly

insisted on their all leaving me : and declared I would not suffer any one of them to continue in the room against my consent ; for I knew, and would support, the rights of an Englishman in the sanctuary of his own house. I was then threatened with immediate violence ; and a regiment of the guards, if necessary. I soon found all resistance would be vain. The constable demanded my sword, and insisted on my immediately attending the messengers to lord Halifax. I replied, that if they were not assassins, they should first give me their names in writing. They complied with this, and thirteen set their hands to the paper. I then got into my own chair, and proceeded to lord Halifax, guarded by the messengers and their assistants.

“ I was conducted into a great apartment fronting the park ; where lord Halifax and lord Egremont, the two secretaries of state, were sitting at a table covered with papers,

pens, and ink. The under-secretaries stood near their lordships. Mr. Lovel Stanhope the law-clerk, and Mr. Philip Carteret Webb the solicitor of the treasury, were the only persons besides who attended. Lord Egremont received me with a supercilious, insolent air; lord Halifax, with great politeness. I was desired to take the chair near their lordships; which I did. Lord Halifax then began—‘that he was really concerned that he had been necessitated to proceed in that manner against me; that it was exceedingly to be regretted that a gentleman of my rank and abilities could engage against his king, and his majesty’s government.’ I replied, ‘that his lordship could not be more mistaken, for the king had not a subject more zealously attached to his person and government than myself: that I had all my life been a warm friend of the house of Brunswick, and the protestant succession: that, while I made the truest professions of duty to

the king, I was equally free to declare in the same moment, that I believed no prince had ever the misfortune of being served by such ignorant, insolent, and despotic ministers—of which my being there was a fresh, glaring proof; for I was brought before their lordships by force, under a general warrant, which named nobody, in violation of the laws of my country, and of the privileges of parliament: that I begged both their lordships to remember my present declaration, that, on the very first day of the ensuing session of parliament, I would stand up in my place, and impeach them for the outrage which they had committed, in my person, against the liberties of the people.’ Lord Halifax answered, ‘that nothing had been done but by the advice of the best lawyers, and that it was now his duty to examine me.’ He had in his hand a long list of questions, regularly numbered. He began, ‘Mr. Wilkes, do you know Mr. Kearsley?’

when did you see him?' &c. &c. I replied, 'that I suspected there was a vain hope my answer would tend towards what his lordship wished to know: that he seemed to be lost in a dark and intricate path, and really wanted much light to guide him through it; but that I could assure his lordship, not a single ray should come from me.' Lord Halifax returned to the charge: 'Mr. Wilkes, do you know Mr. Kearsley,' &c. &c. I said, 'that this was a curiosity on his lordship's part, which, however laudable in the secretary, I did not find myself disposed to gratify; and that, at the end of my examination, all the quires of paper on their lordships' table should be as milk-white as at the beginning.' Lord Halifax then desired to remind me of my being their prisoner, and of their right to examine me. I answered, 'that I should imagine their lordships' time was too precious to be trifled away in that manner; that

they might have seen before, I would never say one word they desired to know ;' and I added, ' indeed, my lords, I am not made of such slight, flimsy stuff : ' then, turning to lord Egremont, I said, ' Could you employ tortures, I would never utter a word unbecoming my honour, or affecting the sacred confidence of any friend. God has given me firmness and fidelity. You trifle away your time most egregiously, my lords.' Lord Halifax then advised me ' to weigh well the consequences of my conduct ; and the advantages to myself of a generous, frank, confession.' I lamented ' the prostitution of the word *generous*, to what I should consider as an act of the utmost treachery, cowardice, and wickedness.' His lordship then asked me, ' if I chose to be a prisoner in my own house, at the Tower, or in Newgate ; for he was disposed to oblige me.' I gave his lordship my thanks ; but I desired to remark, ' that I never re-

ceived an obligation but from a friend: that I demanded justice, and my immediate liberty, as an Englishman who had not offended the laws of his country: that as to the rest, it was beneath my attention; the odious idea of restraint was the same: odious idea every where: that I would go where I pleased; and, if I was restrained by a superior force, I must yield to the violence, but would never give colour to it by a shameful compromise: that every thing was indifferent to me, in comparison with my honour and my liberty: that I made my appeal to the laws; and had already, by my friends, applied to the court of common-pleas for a habeas-corpus, which the chief-justice had actually ordered to be issued; and that I hoped to owe my discharge solely to my innocence, and to the vigour of the law in a free country. Lord Halifax then told me, ‘that I should be sent to the Tower, where I should be treated in a manner suitable to my rank;

and that he hoped the messengers had behaved well to me.' I acknowledged that they had behaved with humanity, and even civility to me, notwithstanding the ruffian orders given them by his lordship's colleague. I then again turned to lord Egremont, and said, ' Your lordship's verbal orders were, to drag me out of my bed at midnight. The first man who had entered my bed-chamber by force, I should have laid dead on the spot. Probably I should have fallen in the skirmish with the others. I thank God, not your lordship, that such a scene of blood has been avoided. Your lordship is very ready to issue orders, which you have neither the courage to sign, nor, I believe, to justify.' No reply was made to this; and the conversation dropped. Lord Halifax retired into another apartment. Lord Egremont continued, sullen^d and silent, about a quarter of an hour. I then made a few remarks on some capital pictures which

were in the room, and his lordship left me alone.

“I was afterwards conducted into another apartment. I found there several of my friends, in argument with the most infamous of all the tools of that administration, Mr. Philip Carteret Webb. He confirmed to me that I was to be carried to the Tower, and wished to know if I had any favours to ask. I replied, ‘that I was used to confer, not to receive, favours: that I was superior to the receiving any even from his masters: that all I would say to him was, if my valet-de-chambre was allowed to attend me in the Tower, I should be shaved and have a clean shirt; if he was not, I should have a long beard and dirty linen.’ Mr. Webb said, ‘that orders would be given for his admission at the Tower.’ I complained of the shameful evasion of the habeas-corpus, in sending me to the Tower though the orders of the chief-justice Pratt were known. Mr. Webb made no reply

to this. He came to visit me at the Tower in the beginning of my imprisonment, when I had not the permission to see any friend. I desired him almost at his first entrance to take his leave; for, if I was not allowed to see those whom I loved, I would not see those whom I despised.

“While I continued in the Tower, I was pressed to offer bail in order to regain my liberty; and two of the first nobility desired to be my securities in the sum of 100,000*l.* each. I was exceedingly grateful for the offer, but would not accept it. I observed, that neither my health nor my spirits were affected: that I would, by great temperance and abstinence, endeavour to compensate the want of air and exercise; but if my health suffered in a dangerous way, I would then accept such generous offers,—for I hoped to live, that so noble a cause might be brought to a glorious issue for the liberties of my country. From the beginning of this arduous busi-

ness, I would not on any occasion give bail; by which I never involved any friend, and remained the perfect master of my own conduct.

“ I shall now, my lord, proceed to do myself justice against a calumny of sir John Cust; a person of the meanest natural parts, and infinitely beneath all regard,—except from the office he bears with the utmost discredit to himself, and with equal disgrace and insufficiency to the public. I find in the volume of the journals of the house of commons just published, (vol. xxix, p. 721,) ‘ Jovis, 19^o die Januarii, 1764. Mr. Speaker acquainted the house, that he, upon Tuesday last, received a letter by the general post from Mr. Wilkes, dated Paris the 11th instant; inclosing a paper in the French language, purporting to be a certificate of one of the French king’s physicians, and of a surgeon of the said king’s army, relating to the state of Mr. Wilkes’s health;

‘subscribed by two names, but not authenticated before a notary-public, nor the signature thereof verified in any manner whatsoever.’ Then follow the letter and certificate*. The insinuation is too plain to be overlooked, too false to be forgiven. The signature was verified by my letter. It is certain that the certificate was in all the usual forms: yet though the affair was determined with respect to me, and I was indecently expelled the house of commons on the same day without any time being allowed for other proof, a regard to truth and my own honour made me give the most complete answer to this wretched subterfuge of the abandoned majority. I sent a second certificate in the unusual form they had prescribed themselves, attested by two notaries, and confirmed by the English ambassador†. I wrote likewise again to the speaker on the 5th of February following; but neither the

* Vol. ii. pages 41 and following, of the present work.

† Vol. ii. page 45.

second letter, certificate, nor attestation, is to be found in the Journals; as they ought, in justice to my character. I have however, my lord, taken care that they should be published: for in a free government like ours I will endeavour, through my life, to emulate the spirit of ancient Rome,—*provoco ad populum*; and while the people do not condemn me, I shall, perhaps in the present, most certainly in every succeeding age, rise superior to any party cabal or court faction.—This step covered my enemies with confusion, but was of no further service to me. The party war against me ceased, of course, in the house of commons; but flamed with equal fury in Westminster-hall, and was attended with every circumstance of revenge and cruelty which the ingenious wit of a Mansfield could devise to gratify the malice of a bad heart.

“ By the same Journals, page 723, I find that I am voted guilty of writing and publishing the paper entitled ‘ The North Briton, N^o 45 ;’ and that several witnesses

were examined. There is not however in the Journals a single word of the evidence which they gave ; and it is well known that not one of them did, or could, say any thing relative to the *authorship*. The evidence of the *publication* was exceedingly slight ; but the willingness of the judges made ample amends for the deficiency of the witnesses, who were not upon oath. The administration did not choose to risk either of these charges against me, even in the court of king's-bench ; and I was only tried for a republication.—I will never blush at the imputation of being the author of that paper, because I know that truth is respected in every line of it. One circumstance will soon fully appear to the indignant public. I mean the large debt on the civil list ; contracted chiefly by the scandalous purchase of a parliamentary approbation of the late ignominious peace, the arbitrary excise, and other ruinous measures of the

Scottish minister *. But I leave the affair of the civil list to a future exact discussion.

“ The last calumny, my lord, which I shall disapprove, respects the actions at law against lord Halifax. It is said that I have neglected, or purposely discontinued them, since my exile. The imputation is totally groundless. I was so ill at Paris in the beginning of the year 1764, that it was impossible for me then to return to England alive; but I gave the most express orders that the law proceedings should be carried on with vigour, and in fact there was not a moment's delay. When my wound began to heal in the spring, I was dissuaded by all my friends from returning to a country where the same administration which had illegally seized my person, plundered my house, corrupted the fidelity of my servants, and—by the wicked arts of an arbitrary judge, who caused the records to be falsified—had just obtained two verdicts against me, were still in full

* Page 90, above.

power. I yielded to these reasons, because *propter eorum scelus, nihil mihi intra meos parietes tutum, nihil insidiis vacuum, viderem.* Lord Halifax, for nearly two years, availed himself of every advantage which privilege and the chicane of law could furnish. He never entered any appearance to a court of justice; and the common-pleas had, as far as they could, punished such an open contempt, such a daring proof that administration would not submit to the law of the land, and had endeavoured to compel his lordship to appear. Towards the end of 1764 I was outlawed: the proceedings continued against his lordship till that hour. He then appeared; and his only plea was, that, as an outlaw, I could not hold any action. No other defence was made against the heinous charge of having, in my person, violated the rights of the people.

“ I felt this, my lord, as the most cruel stroke which fortune had given me.

Justice had at length overtaken many of the inferior criminals; but my outlawry prevented my punishing the great, the capital offender, when, after all his subterfuges, he was almost within my reach. I please myself however with the reflexion, that no minister has since dared to issue a general warrant, nor to sign an order for the seizure of papers. In the one, the personal liberty of every subject is immediately concerned: on the other may depend not only his own safety and property, but (what will come still more home to a man of honour) the security, the happiness, of those with whom he is most intimately connected; their fortunes, their future views, perhaps secrets the discovery of which would drive the coldest stoic to despair; their very existence possibly, all that is important in the public walk of life, all that is dear and sacred in friendship and in love. I was the last oppressed, but I was the first man who had the courage

to carry through a just resistance to these acts of despotism. Now, the opinions of our sovereign courts of justice are known and established. I rejoice that several others, who suffered before me, have since made their appeal to the laws, and obtained redress. I hope the iron rod of ministerial oppression is at length broken, and that I am the last victim of violence and cruelty. I then shall not regret all the sacrifices I have made; and my mind shall feast itself with the recollection, in the unjust exile which I am doomed to suffer from my friends and my native land.

“ I will now, my lord, only add, however unfashionable such a declaration may be, that consistency shall never depart from my character; that to the last moment I will preserve the same fixed and unconquerable hatred to the enemies of freedom and of the constitution of our happy island, the same warm attachment to the friends and the cause of liberty; that I

keep a steady and a longing eye on England; that my endeavours for the good and service of my country, by every method left me, shall have a period only with my life; and that, although I do not mean to lay any future claim to your grace's favour, I will take care to secure your esteem.

“ I am, my lord,
your grace's most obedient,
and very humble servant,

JOHN WILKES.”

‘ Gratias tibi, Deus optime, maxime, cujus nutu
‘ et imperio nata est et aucta res Anglicana, lubens
‘ lætusque ago; libertate publicâ in hanc diem et
‘ horam, per manus (quod voluisti) meas, servatâ :—
‘ eandem et in æternum serva, fove, protege, propi-
‘ tiate, supplex oro.’

THE publication of this letter contributed considerably to the increase of Mr. Wilkes's popularity. The public now saw that he was a persecuted man. No minister of any party chose to stand forward in his behalf; but they all avoided him, though all had been benefited by his means, immediately or eventually.—The nation had more generosity. They, in general, espoused his cause: partly from commiseration, because they thought he had suffered more than his offence deserved; and partly from gratitude, because he had served his country in some essential points of constitutional liberty. Though he had not a purse to contend with the Treasury, yet he had the courage to risk his all, together with his name: from the primary proceedings in the courts of law against the king's messengers, Mr. Wood, and others; by which the general warrant, and the arbitrary and violent conduct of ministers, received the first condemnation.

There was a merit in this firmness, which

the people at that time were not acquainted with. Mr. Wilkes might, even then, have secretly made his peace with ministers; and, instead of punishment, might have profited by connivance: for there was a strong reluctance to relinquish this power of issuing general warrants. But his spirit was superior to this compromise; and his exile was the consequence. There is no revenge so acrimonious as that which is provoked by disappointment. Certain offers were made through a channel which we are too near the time to reveal; and the rejection of which inspired the most malignant indignation and resentment. Though this circumstance was not known to the nation in general, yet every one saw that a peculiar animosity pervaded the whole conduct of the court of St. James's, which could only be ascribed to some prejudices wrought by ministers either *official* or *efficient*.*

* This was a distinction made by lord Mansfield, in the house of lords, in vindication of what Mr. Burke called "a double cabinet."

MR. WILKES'S THIRD RETURN
TO ENGLAND.

TOWARDS the end of the year 1767, after many revolutions in his mind, he resolved to venture once more to England. His situation at Paris was become disagreeable; for his necessities had compelled him to contract many debts there, and he could draw no more money from England. His affairs were desperate; but his popularity in England was high, and he determined upon taking advantage of this popularity at its flood. He thought it unnecessary to waste any more time in trifling negotiations, either with ministers or their opponents; they were not his friends in his present state, and their enmity could not make it worse. Whatever the danger might be therefore, he determined to meet it: but he did not come immediately to London; he travelled by a circuitous route.

After Mr. Wilkes had left Paris, he wrote the four following letters to his daughter, who was in London.

LETTER I.

“Hague, Dec. 25, 1767.

“AMONG a people whose souls are so little tuned to joy, I could scarcely think of sending all the cheerful compliments of this merry season to any body but my dearest daughter. Besides, I am just come from the ambassador’s chapel, where I have been stupified by a wretched discourse of an Englishman, ten times worse than the Scottish Trail*. Yet under all these disadvantages my heart dictates, and my hand obeys, in wishing you every joy, and every blessing.

“The canals are now entirely frozen over, and the frost is set in very severely. No boats can pass; and I was obliged to go in a coach yesterday, little better than a waggon, to pay my duty to the university of Leyden. My good mother † (for in that

* Lord Hertford’s chaplain; mentioned also in vol. ii. page 36.

† *Alma mater.*

style we always speak of the university where we are educated) received me with raptures, and congratulated herself on having produced so illustrious a son—a very flattering compliment for me! Travelling is at present almost impossible; and people's whole attention seems to be centred in keeping themselves warm. I skate almost every day; and amuse myself much with so noble an exercise.

“ I received my dear girl's letter of the 15th on the 19th, and the newspapers, very safe. I thank you much for both: the wind is contrary, and to-day two days more posts are due. Be so good to continue to favour me with your letters, and the newspapers, for the present according to the direction I gave you.

“ Nepreu, by mistake, packed up your Boileau, which I have very safe.—I am very glad you have been to see my mother. I beg you often to repeat that visit.

“ I am concerned that mademoiselle La Vallerie is not well, nor Flamand. I

hope, before you receive this they will be both so. I shall write to your *bonne* to-night: but I will not have her take the *voyage* (as the French call it) to Lille, till she is quite well, as well as Flamand; for I foresee that I must be a little longer here, from the great plan in hand.

“ You have been at the play, and the opera; pray tell me how you find Corradini’s dancing, and if the opera is much frequented.

“ I rejoice that you found the Fameses well: they are a worthy family. Miss Shrimpton is a good girl.—Your good-sense will make you seek the best authors, Pope, Addison, Shakspeare, &c. whom you cannot read too often. My brother Israel will lend you Boileau, Racine, &c. among the French. Pray, write to me in that language sometimes.

“ I was one day at Rotterdam; and made my bow at our good friend’s (Mr. Davidson’s) house, to his partner Mr. Barker. He is lodged like a prince; and I will write

to Mr. Davidson, that there wants nothing but a lady.

“ I have found a French acquaintance, monsieur Favier, whom I see often ; and a lively female of that nation, who lives with a Dutch nobleman,—a phenomenon in this country, a man of wit and parts.

“ Will you, my dear girl, be so good to send the enclosed to Mr. Davidson ; and so just as to believe me ever,

your most affectionate father,

JOHN WILKES.”

LETTER II.

“ Hague, Jan. 1, 1768.

“ *BON jour, & bon an, ma très chère fille!*
May heaven shower down all its choicest blessings on you! May you have all happiness for very many years! and may you enjoy it with a man worthy of your merit!

“ Such are my fervent wishes ; though I cannot say yet my *prayers* for you,—it is so

cold, and I am so undetermined whether I can have courage enough to support two tedious hours at the ambassador's chapel.

“Yesterday was a propitious day; for the wind being changed, I received three of my dear daughter's letters.

“I am very sorry you have so bad a cold. Believe me, my dear Polly, a warm room in the capital is preferable, during the bad weather, to taking the air in so moist and damp a climate as I take that of London to be. I always admired the prudence of my mother Wilkes, besides, in another article,—that of well airing all linen, which is too much neglected where you are: I often put you in mind that I was brought up at Leyden; and there you would be ordered to continue in bed sixteen or eighteen hours out of the twenty-four, when you are oppressed with a violent cold.

“I received all the St. James's Chronicles, and I thank my dear girl for her attention to every thing. I will write to you by

the next post; and give you the particulars of every thing as far as I can, if I hear from England.—Yesterday, and the day before, it thawed a little; but at present it freezes again with great force, and no *treckscuyt* can pass as yet.

“The Dutch torment me with compliments; and they are thronging around me to see if I am like my print, which they have.

“I intend to go again to-morrow on scates to Ryswick. I shall write to madame La Chanteraine to-morrow, to wish her the compliments of the *jour de l'an*.

“Pray, beg your uncle Heaton to inclose me the letter, printed in one of the papers, so much in my favour, he promised to send me but has forgot, and I have not reminded him in my letter. Continue to love me, my dearest Polly; and be assured that I shall ever be

your affectionate father,

JOHN WILKES.”

LETTER III.

“ Rotterdam, Jan. 8, 1768.

“ I HOPE that my dearest daughter has passed the holidays in an agreeable manner, and that the bad cold she complained of has left her. I have been under no small apprehensions on her account, from the extreme severity of the weather; but I trust that by her usual care and prudence she has conquered a troublesome disorder, and fortified herself against so outrageous a season.

“ I beg you to continue to direct to me as before, under the name of Fitzosborne; but, for the rest, let it be *au maréchal de Turenne, à Rotterdam, Hollande*. I will not trouble you any longer to send me the St. James's Chronicle, because it comes here very regularly.

“ The Maese is the great river which comes to Rotterdam. You cannot ima-

gine how gay a scene it is at present: from the number of *traineaux* of one and two horses, with ladies covered with furs of all the dyes of the rainbow; ice-boats sailing up and down, the scaters, the booths, &c. All Holland is now alive. The frost is said to be more severe than it was in 1740: it froze in one night the thickness of two inches and a half.—We have yet no post from England. Four are now due.

“ Pray tell Mr. Davidson, that I drank his health yesterday in his own house, and admired the fine scene from his windows, but that nothing is cheerful there without him. I sent many warm wishes after him, under his own hospitable roof; with Mr. Barker, and a good old lady Mr. Barker’s mother. There is in the *salle de compagnie* a print of poor miss Davidson, from a painting of Reynolds; and so like that I could not keep my eyes off, nor a

tear now and then from starting at the remembrance of so many soft and amiable beauties.

“I am visited here by Mr. Sowden, whom I knew when I was a school-boy,—a great acquaintance of the old folks in Red Lion court. He is minister of the presbyterian church here*.

“There are very many English here, and not a few Scots: the last are cold and respectful; the first are warm and hearty.

“The Turkish Hope is here, and I ate a Dutch dinner at his house to-day. The poor Armenian boy we saw at Bercy, shivered like a canary-bird.

“It is a vile country this, dear Polly; and so says mademoiselle La Vallerie of

* The gentleman into whose hands lady Mary Wortley Montague deposited the corrected manuscript of her Letters and other pieces. See this matter related in the Memoirs of her Ladyship, prefixed to Mr. Dallaway's *authentic* edition of her Letters and Works, just published.

the part of Flanders about Ostend, yet she wishes only to leave it *quand le tems sera plus doux*. It is now almost impossible to travel, except such small distances as from the Hague to Rotterdam—about twelve English miles.

“ Adieu! and believe me ever
your affectionate father,
JOHN WILKES.”

LETTER IV.

“ Antwerp, Thursday, Jan. 21, 1768.

“ AFTER a thousand difficulties, dearest Polly, from the thick-ribbed ice on the river and roads, I arrived safe here on Tuesday night; and waited an hour at the gate for admittance, almost frozen. I am glad that I made this tour, now, alone; but I hope to take it along with you in a less severe time, when you will only have to suffer the common little fatigues of travelling.

“ I long to enjoy with you the wondrous productions of Rubens and Vandyke, which are in the churches and convents here. There is nothing out of Italy comparable to this town, for the beauty and magnificence of the churches, in the richest marble, and most exquisite painting and sculpture.

“ I have tried almost every mode of travelling since I saw you; in a coach, chaise, waggon, boat, *treckschuyt*, *traineau*, sledge, &c. I know none so agreeable as my English post-chaise; especially with you in it: I find then no tedious hours, nor do I complain of bad roads; a cheerful sensible companion gives a gay colouring to the whole scene around.

“ I left Rotterdam on Sunday; and travelled my ‘sabbath-day’s journey’ to Gorcum, where I lay. I hope that you prayed for me frequently, such severe weather, as a traveller. I passed two great rivers, the Lech and the Yssel, on foot; and the next

day another, whose name I have forgot, in a *traineau*. I was almost perished with cold, when I got to Breda on Monday night; but at last a good supper and a good fire recovered me, and restored my good-humour. I have had no dinner all the way, in order to save my distance in travelling. From Breda to Antwerp are most execrable roads; and four horses could scarcely draw us through them.

“ I hope to be on Sunday at Ostend; and I shall wait some time there, to have all my advices from England. Pray write to me under the name of Fitzosborne, as before, at the *botel de ville, à Ostende, Flandre*.

“ I shall beg your acceptance of two exquisite drawings I have purchased for you here.

“ I am, my dearest daughter,
your affectionate father,
JOHN WILKES.”

A FEW weeks before Mr. Wilkes embarked for England, he met Mr. Cotes at Ostend, by appointment. The design of this meeting was to consider of, and to concert, the measures to be taken when Mr. Wilkes arrived in London.

The general election being fixed by law to take place in the ensuing spring, Mr. Wilkes was ardently desirous to be returned for any place. His principal object in coming to England was, to obtain a seat in parliament; and for this reason among many others he made this appointment to meet Mr. Cotes—and they now considered the matter very fully. Mr. Wilkes's desire was to become one of the representatives for London, because he had many friends in the city; but Mr. Cotes wished him to be a candidate for Westminster, because he thought he had a good interest there with Mr. John Churchill* and many

* Brother of the poet.

other friends. They did not at that time settle this difference in their opinions; and Mr. Cotes left Mr. Wilkes at Ostend, and returned to London: but on the 22d of January, 1768, he wrote to him the following letter, which explains this matter a little further.

“ London, Jan. 22, 1768.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ WHAT little information I have been able to get by seeing Beardmore, &c. confirms me in the opinion I was in when we parted. It is a consideration whether making a faint attempt, without probability of success, will not contribute to the triumph of your enemies? On the other hand, I am still confident such a storm may be raised in Westminster, that some good effect may result, if not the accomplishment of our wishes—though I think *that* far from being impossible. I find a

spirit equal to my wishes. Perhaps I am too sanguine. One thing I am very certain of;—the general discontent, added to the wretched state of the ministry: lord Gower to be president, lord Weymouth secretary of state *vice* Conway, lord Hillsborough secretary for plantations (a new office), &c. These changes add to the discontent, and make a Joseph's coat. Our friend *, you may be very certain, has nothing to do with these men: he really wishes you well.

“You must determine soon what part you will take. In short, if I was to write a Dutch folio, I could not do more than repeat what passed at our last meeting. Your presence is indispensable.—As to your private affairs, I must refer you to Heaton. He told me he was looking for Mr. Fitzherbert, and expected something from him. I have been thinking of opening a

* Earl Temple.

subscription, under the title of "a subscription in support of liberty, honour, and gratitude." I fancy it will produce something considerable. Let me have your sentiments.—The address intended for London may do for Westminster, with some alterations. Almon has been very dangerously ill, but is better.

"Ever yours, H. C."

ON the 6th or 7th of February, 1768, Mr. Wilkes returned to England. As soon as he arrived in London, he sent the following note to Mr. Almon:

"I AM at Mr. Hayley's, in Great Alie-street, Goodman's-fields; where I shall be glad to see you.

"I am, dear sir,
your affectionate,
humble servant,
JOHN WILKES."

"Sunday, Feb. 7, 1768."

To Mr. Almon.

“ Friday Afternoon, Feb. 19, 1768.

“ I HAVE enlarged, my dear sir, the letter you saw, very much ; and it will be at your service, as well as a critique on Boswell’s account of Corsica *.

“ Suppose you advertise directly, ‘ To be published on the day of the dissolution of the parliament, an Extraordinary Number of the Political Register; containing Remarks on the Speech of the Speaker, Congratulations to the Good People of England,’ &c.

“ I wish you would get me the Oxford letter to sir Thomas Stapleton and Mr. Lee, with their answer. I will weave them into the work, and set the nation a laughing at their expence.

“ Remember, I am always at your service for every good word and work. I go to-

* This critique was never written.

morrow to very good lodgings —, where I shall be always glad to see you*.

“Pray, send me by my servant the Introduction to my History. I want to make several additions, and you shall have that and more next week. Let me have what sheets you have printed of M.’s book, about my case.

“ Let us often meet.”

THE Remarks on the speaker’s speech (mentioned in the preceding letter) when he reprimanded the magistrates of Oxford, was a composition of great merit, and was much admired. But the Congratulations, and the Letter to sir Thomas Stapleton, Mr. Wilkes did not take any further notice of.

* A few weeks after writing this letter, he hired a house at the corner of Prince’s-court, Great George-street, where he resided some years.

The following is a copy, from the Votes of the house of commons, of the speaker's speech when he reprimanded Philip Ward, late mayor of the city of Oxford; John Treacher, sir Thomas Munday, Thomas Wise, John Nicholls, John Philips, Isaac Lawrence, Richard Tawney, all of the said city; Thomas Robinson, and John Brown, late bailiffs of the said city; upon their knees, at the bar of the house, on Wednesday the 10th of February, 1768.

“THE offence of which you have been guilty, has justly brought you under the severe displeasure of this house. A more enormous crime you could not well commit; since a deeper wound could not be given to the constitution itself, than by the open and dangerous attempt which you have made to subvert the freedom and independence of this house.

“The freedom of this house is the freedom of the country, which can continue no

longer than while the voices of the electors are uninfluenced by any base or venal motive. For, if abilities and integrity are no recommendation to the electors, if those who bid highest for their voices are to obtain them from such detestable considerations, this house will not be the representatives of the people of Great Britain. Instead of being the guardians and protectors of their liberties, instead of redressing the grievances of the subject, this house itself will be the author of the worst of grievances: they will become the venal instruments of power; to reduce this happy nation, the envy and admiration of the world, to the lowest state of misery and servitude. This is the abject condition to which you have attempted to bring your fellow-subjects.

“Many circumstances concur to aggravate your offence. The place of your residence was a singular advantage. You had at all times the example of one of the most

learned and respectable bodies in Europe before your eyes. Their conduct in every instance, especially in the choice of their representatives in parliament, was well worthy of your imitation.

“You are magistrates of a great city. In such a station it was a duty peculiarly incumbent upon you, to watch over the morals of your fellow-citizens; to keep yourselves pure from venality; and to prevent, by your influence, those under your government from being tainted by this growing and pestilential vice. How have you abused this trust? You yourselves have set the infamous example of prostitution, in the most public and daring manner.

“Surely you must have felt some remorse from the generous disdain with which your corrupt offer was rejected by your representatives. They thought, and justly thought, that a seat in this house, obtained by a free and independent choice of their constituents, was

the highest honour to which a subject can aspire ; and that discharging their duty as such representatives, was the noblest of services. Sorry I am to say, that these considerations do not appear to have had the least weight with you.

“However, you have at last acknowledged your guilt ; and, by your petition yesterday, you seem conscious of the enormity of your offence. This house, in the terror of its judgments, always thinks upon mercy : nor do they ever inflict punishment, but for the sake of example ; and to prevent others from becoming the objects of their resentment.

“The censure passed upon you will, they hope, have that effect. You are now the objects of their mercy ; and are brought to the bar to be discharged.

“May you be penetrated with a due sense of their justice and lenity ! May you atone for your past offence, by your constant endeavours to make a right use of the inval-

able privileges which you enjoy as electors! Consider these privileges as a sacred trust reposed in you. Discharge it with integrity.

“But before you rise from your present posture, I do, in obedience to the commands of this house, REPRIMAND you.

“I am now to acquaint you, that you are discharged, paying your fees.”

The preceding speech is printed in this work, only to give opportunity to introduce Mr. Wilkes's Remarks upon it: which were much admired, at the time of their first publication *, for their classical elegance and satirical vivacity; and will, no doubt, by all the friends of literature, be esteemed worthy of preservation †.

* In the Political Register.

† This copy includes all Mr. Wilkes's subsequent additions and corrections, which were considerable.

“ To the Editor of the Political Register.

“ I BEG you will print above the noblest piece of modern eloquence this country has produced. I mean the warm and pathetic harangue of the present speaker, sir John Cust, the Cicero of Parliament, when he pointed all his thunders, red with uncommon wrath, against the devoted heads of the poor prostrate Philip Ward late mayor of Oxford, John Treacher, sir Thomas Munday, &c. who were lately brought, for the high crime of bribery and corruption, to the bar, of not only the most uncorrupted, but the most uncorruptible, assembly in the whole world. You will immediately know, sir, that I can only speak of the lower house of our parliament; and that I allude to those three additional white classic pages to the Votes, which are called there ‘ The

‘ Speech of the Speaker of the House of
‘ Commons.’

“ These Journals scarcely ever gratify the public with any speeches, except two at the beginning of each parliament, when the new speaker is proposed. They are always professed panegyricks ; and I will venture to promise every future speaker, that all the virtues of Onslow himself he shall have in the Journals, although he may not have from nature the strong abilities, nor from himself the wondrous accomplishments, of the excellent sir John Cust. It was therefore peculiarly obliging in this gentleman to enrich our Journals and our language, by yielding to the earnest entreaties of his worthy brother-members ; whose happy efforts to overcome such almost invincible modesty we can never enough applaud. We see their joint detestation of bribery and corruption ; and the stigma of infamy is now affixed to such enormous

guilt. If so baneful a weed is not quite rooted out, it is at least blasted, by the *afflatus divinus* of our Cicero ; and, like the accursed fig-tree, will droop and wither. No man, for the future, shall ever dare to sign a bargain for 1500l. to bring his son into parliament. Should even a future speaker venture on this, I hope to see him on his knees ; and that an orator equal to sir John Cust (if indeed nature is not exhausted by this last perfect production) will pronounce him expelled, and add those awful words—‘ I do reprimand you*.’

“ This beautiful oration of sir John Cust, I think, sir, is not only striking in a general comprehensive view of it, but will likewise bear the nicest scrutiny. It is complete, taken in the whole ; and also nicely

* Quære. What was that speaker's name, whose son was brought into parliament on these terms ?

finished in every minute part. It may be analysed to as much advantage as any thing in Tully. Although I feel that I am unequal to the task, I shall venture to attempt it, because it will be the occasion of my dwelling longer on a performance which gives more pleasure the more it is examined.

“ I shall first consider the oration itself, as branched out under the four general heads of

Exordium ;

Constitutio Causæ ;

Insectatio ;

Peroratio.

And then I shall examine the four other accessory circumstances of the

Personæ ;

Tempus ;

Locus ;

Eventus.

“ I begin with the *exordium*. It is plain and simple, according to all the rules laid down by the ancients. It contains only these words,

‘ Philip Ward, John Treacher, sir Thomas Munday, Thomas Wise, John Nicholls, John Philips, Isaac Lawrence, Richard Tawney, Thomas Robinson, John Brown.’

“ No *exordium* was ever built on so firm a foundation. It stands on the legal base of the baptismal register itself. I do not believe any thing happier could have been conceived; unless the great orator had taken Tully’s own *exordium*, *pro Archia pœta*: ‘ *Si quid est in me ingenii, quod sentio quàm sit exiguum,*’ &c. But why are we to be charmed with any such false modesty in him, more than we are in his great model Cicero?

“ I must confess, with all my partialities about me, that the *constitutio causæ* is not

so clear and full as I could wish. In the oration it is merely said, ‘The offence of which you have been guilty, has justly brought you under the severe displeasure of this house:’ while the title is only, ‘The Speech of the Speaker of the House of Commons, when he reprimanded Philip Ward, &c. upon their knees,’ &c. without saying for what crime. We are thus left to guess what it could be; and I own that when I read at the beginning, that ‘a *more* enormous crime they could not well commit,’ I did not directly think of bribery and corruption. Although I was a little doubtful what enormous crime a man might *well* commit; yet when I heard that a *more* enormous crime they could not well commit, I own I was afraid that they had been guilty of murder, perjury, rape, incest, sodomy, or some other crimes whose guilt I should imagine to be of a shade darker and deeper than even this of bribery and corruption.

I was a little relieved therefore when I found that this was not the case, and that there was even somewhat of honesty in their proceedings; that they were endeavouring to pay off old debts, by trying to get beforehand a part of the money which such *country-puts* falsely imagine their representatives afterwards make of them. I heard too that the price asked was considerably under the market price of boroughs: for, sir, it can no longer be dissembled, that a share of the British legislature has in our times been bought and sold as publicly as a share in the New River company, or in the York-buildings water-works, or either of the theatres. I admired, however, in all this, the noble enthusiastic zeal of sir John Cust; and the *verba ardentia*, the bold glowing expressions, in which that zeal was shewn—‘a more enormous crime you could not well commit.’ Yet I believe that not many gentlemen in Eng-

land will be quite so severe upon them. Few of my countrymen would keep company with a murderer, a man perjured, &c.; but I am apt to think, that before two months are past, we shall hear of some very respectable personages shaking by the hand, hobbing and nobbing, touching glasses with, nay, perhaps condescending even to cuckold, these very Philip Ward, John Treacher, sir Thomas Munday, &c.—If I am rather uncharitable in the last article, sir, I beg pardon : but it may be because, as to the nature of crimes, I do not hold this modern galantry to be quite so enormous a sin as some others ; and as it is in the eye of James Boswell, esq. of Auchinleck in Ayrshire. That primitive Christian, that admirer of every thing opposite and contradictory, that gentleman (as well as sir John Cust) ventures on a new system of crimes. In his Account of Corsica, page 417, he says, ‘ better occasional murders, ‘ than frequent adulteries.’ Surely none

but an Italian with the stiletto in his pocket, and a Highlander with the dirk by his side, ever talked so lightly of murder.

“ Two little circumstances of the cause should be mentioned under this head. It appears, by the Votes, that a private letter had been sent to sir Thomas Stapleton, and another to Mr. Lee. Now our ingenious orator finds this not only a dangerous but an ‘ open attempt to subvert the freedom ‘ and independency of this house ;’ and, in the second place, declares they have ‘ set ‘ the infamous example of prostitution, in ‘ the most *public* as well as daring manner,’ by writing a *private* letter to two former friends.

“ If a regard to truth, sir, has obliged me to find the *constitutio causæ* rather deficient, I am glad the *insectatio* can with justice be said to be complete. It is touched with wonderful force and spirit ; though I am afraid it will be only another proof that the

townsmen of Oxford have always hated the university, if they chose in every thing to act the quite opposite part. I beg to quote the whole sentence : ‘ Many circumstances concur to aggravate your offence. ‘ The place of your residence was a singular ‘ advantage. You had, at all times, the ‘ example of one of the most learned and ‘ respectable bodies in Europe before your ‘ eyes: their conduct in every instance, but ‘ especially in the choice of their representatives in parliament, was well worthy of ‘ your imitation.’ Now this is the true part of an orator : to advance bold, daring assertions; to support them with effrontery; and to leave cold, heavy, phlegmatic people, afterwards to examine into the dry matter of fact. ‘ At all times’—‘ in every ‘ instance’—and ‘ well worthy of your imitation !’ Let us, then, go to a few historical facts, in our own times, since the accession of the house of Brunswick.—I wish to know, if the overt acts of treason daily

committed at Oxford, in 1715, did not force the government to send general Pepperel thither, in the same military disposition, and with the same orders, he would have had in marching into Dunkirk. Was the conduct of Oxford at that time well worthy our imitation? I hope not, even in the opinion of sir John Cust; because, I suppose, than treason, a more enormous crime a man cannot *well* commit. If the conduct of Oxford was then 'well worthy 'of imitation,' the conduct of George I. was to the highest degree cruel and oppressive: but the sober page of history gives the lie to such oratorical declamations, even of sir John Cust himself; and we now thank the memory of that great prince for so seasonable an interposition, so spirited an attack on jacobitism in her strongest hold, her very citadel.—When their chancellor, the duke of Ormond, was attainted of high treason, was it 'worthy of imitation' that the university chose for his

successor a man equally disaffected,—his own brother, the earl of Arran?—In the late reign, the conduct of the university, particularly of the vice-chancellor, in the affair of the students who had publicly drunk the Pretender's health on their knees, was so infamous, that the government could not wink at it. Even so mild a prince as George II. was at last forced to a severity painful to his nature, but which the public good rendered necessary, against the most inveterate enemies of his person and family. Was the conduct of Oxford then worthy of imitation? Methinks, sir, I still hear the seditious shouts of applause given to the pestilent harangues of the late doctor King, when he vilified our great deliverer the duke of Cumberland, and repeated with such energy the treasonable *redeat*!—Was the conduct of the university, at the opening of the Ratcliffe library, by their behaviour to the known enemies of the Brunswick line, and their approba-

tion of every thing hateful to liberty and her friends, 'worthy of imitation?' When I was told of 'all times,' and 'every instance,' in which Oxford has been exemplary in her conduct, I have been led to consider those two instruments of slavery,—the Oxford decree in the reign of Charles II., and the recognition at the accession of James II.; either of which is a repeal of Magna Charta: but I would not go so far back; and I have said enough, sir, to convince you, that I more admire the art of the orator, and the heavenly fire of his eloquence, than the mere mechanic part, the faithfulness of a memory, which in him is not quite exact.

“The *percratio* is, alas! too short; but full of dignity, suited to the majesty of the commons of Great Britain. ‘I do reprimand you!’ The little word *do* is very emphatical here. This is not a case where, as Pope says, ‘feeble expletives their aid *do* join.’ How weak would be the

sense, and how poor the expression, without it !

“ The last words, ‘ you are discharged, ‘ paying your fees,’ I fear, will to many suggest an idea beneath the dignity of parliament; and may make the world imagine that the fees were an illegal claim, not recoverable by action, and that therefore Mr. Speaker took the short way of keeping the parties in custody till his own and the clerk’s fees were paid. But for my part I believe, that, as an orator, he talked of the fees to add to the terror of the sentence, and the weight of the punishment.

“ May I now venture to hint at a little omission in the speech ? There is not a word about undue, unconstitutional influence in elections ; although it would so naturally have come in under the head of ‘ preserving the freedom and independence ‘ of this house.’ This too seemed the more necessary on so public an occasion, because an appeal had been made so lately

to the world, in the case of Mr. Legge's Hampshire election, against the Favourite himself; when all the whigs, as usual, appeared against a Stuart, and were victorious: but perhaps we are as much to admire the wisdom and prudence of sir John Cust in what he has not said, as in what he has. In this case we should copy the famous monsieur Omer Joly de Fleury, the sir Fletcher Norton of the French king; who, speaking of the late Pragmatic Sanction for the expulsion of the Jesuits, says, 'he admires the reasons given by the king of Spain; and still more the reasons he has not given any man, but which are hid in his royal breast.' Yet, after all, I wish we had had one sentence only on this subject from sir John Cust; because 'every thing must have the greatest weight, which falls from such a height:'—permit me, sir, to use the fine imagery of the gentle, smooth, silver-tongued

Conway ; of all our generals, confessedly, *linguâ melior*.

“ Let us now, sir, proceed to the other accessory circumstances, as they are called. The *personæ* are plainly Mr. Speaker himself, in the speaking,—the awful terrors of Olympian Jove sitting on his majestic brow ; three hundred members laughing and listening ; the poor culprits, mace and train bearers, &c. affecting to be grave and solemn,—with looks of meek submission, downcast and low, fixed on the floor, lest they should be burnt up by the flashes of fire from the indignant eyes of the speaker : but they are all *mutæ personæ* except sir John Cust himself, and therefore are beneath our further attention.

“ For the *tempus*, there is something singular to be remarked. The letters which contained the corrupt offer are dated in the year 1766 : one is of May 12, 1766. The first notice taken of them in the

house, is January 26, 1768; yet we see in the Votes, ‘Veneris 5^o die Februarii, 1768. Resolved, that this house doth highly approve of the very *honourable* conduct of the *honourable* Robert Lee and sir Thomas Stapleton, bart. on their receipt of the said letters.’ This is rather hard of digestion. Why did not those gentlemen, the first day of the sitting of the house after the receipt of the said letters, make a complaint themselves to parliament? Why was it left to be done by another, so long after, and without their privity or consent? No complaint is made till nearly two years after the transaction: and as perhaps the finances, no less than the consciences, of ‘the honourable Robert Lee and sir Thomas Stapleton, bart.’ were found not to suit with the offer, it will, I fear, be suspected, that pique and disappointment seemed to have made them at last join in measures which the ‘generous

‘ disdain’ mentioned by the speaker could not at first produce.

“ As for the *locus*, sir,—it is the chapel of St. Stephen ; which formerly glowed with a holy zeal of religion, and afterwards with the bright flame of patriotism while William Pulteney and William Pitt had seats there.

“ As to the *eventus*, it shall be told very shortly. An artful attorney, an accomplice in the guilt, drew his associates into the snare, and then left them. One of the most amiable and excellent peers of this country *, whose family have, for above a century, done very signal services to the city, has, by the treachery of those who owe all to that bounty, and by the mean and artful contrivances of some ignoble persons of the first rank, lost his influence in a place where honour is no longer regarded.”

* Earl of Abingdon.

LETTER TO THE KING.

As soon as it was known that Mr. Wilkes was in London, he thought it his duty to pay a proper respect to his majesty. He therefore wrote the following letter of supplication, which was delivered by his servant at the queen's palace on the 4th of March, 1768.

“SIRE,

“I BEG thus to throw myself at your majesty's feet, and to supplicate that mercy and clemency which shine with such lustre among your many princely virtues.

“Some former ministers, whom your majesty, in condescension to the wishes of your people, has thought proper to remove, employed every wicked and deceitful art to oppress your subject; and to revenge their own personal cause on me whom they imagined to be the principal author of bringing to the public view their ig-

norance, insufficiency, and treachery to your majesty and to the nation.

“ I have been the innocent but unhappy victim of their revenge. I was forced by their injustice and violence into an exile, which I have never ceased for several years to consider as the most cruel oppression, because I no longer could be under the benign protection of your majesty in the land of liberty.

“ With a heart full of zeal for the service of your majesty and my country, I implore, sire, your clemency. My only hopes of pardon are founded in the great goodness and benevolence of your majesty; and every day of freedom you may be graciously pleased to permit me the enjoyment of in my dear native land, shall give proofs of my zeal and attachment to your service.

“ I am, sire,
your majesty's most obedient,
and dutiful subject,

JOHN WILKES.”

“ March 4, 1768.”

No notice whatever was taken of this application.—Though it might be proper to send the letter, yet it ought to have been delivered in a more respectful manner; not by a footman. Mr. Wilkes could not be ignorant of the etiquette of kings; who never take notice of any letters, except from ministers, or persons in their confidence: and therefore it should have been transmitted through such a channel.

ELECTION FOR THE CITY OF LONDON.

PARLIAMENT was dissolved on the 12th of March, 1768; when Mr. Wilkes, by the advice of his friends, immediately offered himself a candidate for the city of London.

Notwithstanding the severity with which

he had treated the duke of Grafton, his grace retorted no acrimony. No *capias* was issued against him, and he appeared publicly. His friends purchased for him the freedom of the city; and he was also admitted to the livery, and appeared every day on the hustings as an eligible candidate without any opposition from the executive powers of the state.

But it ought to be mentioned, that the solicitor of the treasury, in his official capacity, thought himself obliged to serve Mr. Wilkes with an exchequer writ, or bill of discovery of his property—stated to be forfeited to the crown under the outlawry. This writ was rudely executed; being served upon him by a low clerk, when at dinner with a number of his friends, during the election, on the 19th of March, 1768.

The election commenced on the 16th of March. Mr. Wilkes was returned by

the shew of hands ; but a poll being demanded, he was, at the final close of it, unsuccessful : 1247 liverymen, however, voted for him. The causes of his failure he explains thus, in his speech to the livery on the last day of the poll : “ The want of success, out of your power to command, has not in the least abated my zeal for your service. You cannot be unacquainted with the various circumstances which have contributed to it. My friends were of opinion that I ought to wait the dissolution of the last parliament, while the other candidates had been for many months previously soliciting your interest. But, though disappointed, I am not in the least dispirited. Permit me to address you as friends to liberty, and freeholders of the county of Middlesex : declaring my intention of appearing as a candidate for *the county* to represent you in parliament ; and still hoping by your means to have

the honour of being useful to you in the British senate." This speech was received with great applause, and gave unlimited satisfaction.

ELECTION FOR THE COUNTY OF
MIDDLESEX.

THE passion for liberty which had been kindled in the city of London, shewed itself with increased ardour, and to the widest extent, in the county of Middlesex. The freeholders accepted his offer with the warmest affection. They were enthusiasts for the glory of having him their representative.

On the 28th of March the election came on at Brentford. The candidates were sir William Beauchamp Proctor, Mr. Wilkes, and Mr. George Cooke. At the close of the

poll, which finished in one day, the numbers were, for Mr. Wilkes 1292, for Mr. Cooke 827, and for sir W. B. Proctor 807. Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Cooke were therefore declared duly elected. Upon which there were great public rejoicings throughout the metropolis, and in other places.

COMMITMENT OF MR. WILKES TO THE
KING'S-BENCH PRISON.

ON the 22nd of March Mr. Wilkes sent a written notice to the solicitor of the treasury, that he would present himself before the court of king's-bench on the first day of the ensuing term, which was the 20th of April. Accordingly he appeared before the court on that day, and declared himself ready to submit to the laws of his country. But lord Mansfield suggested,

that as he was not before the court by any legal process, the court could not take any cognizance of this *gratis* appearance ; and he was permitted to depart at perfect liberty.

On the 27th Mr. Wilkes, having been served by a *capias utlegatum*, was brought into court in custody. Serjeant Glynn, who was Mr. Wilkes's counsel, pointed out several errors in the outlawry, and offered bail to any amount. Mr. Thurlow* replied to the serjeant on the outlawry. The bail was refused, and Mr. Wilkes was committed to the king's-bench prison.

He was put into a hackney coach attended by the marshal. When they came to Westminster bridge, the populace took the horses from the carriage, and drew it through the city to a public house in Spital-fields. The marshal was forced out of the coach at Temple-bar. When the tumult subsided, he escaped through the back door of the public house, in dis-

* Now lord Thurlow.

guise, and went immediately to the king's-bench prison; where the marshal was highly rejoiced to see him. He several times desired the people to disperse; but they refused.

Next day he was visited by an incredible number of friends; and the prison was surrounded by a numerous concourse of people.

On the 7th of May, the outlawry was argued again; but judgment was postponed until next term.

Mr. Wilkes gave full credit to some information he had received, that lord Mansfield had made up his mind, to establish the outlawry. What happened between the 7th of May and the 8th of June, when the outlawry was reversed, to alter lord Mansfield's opinion, cannot now be explained. The outlawry was reversed by the unanimous judgment of the court; and, on the 18th of June, Mr. Wilkes was again brought before the court to re-

ceive sentence. After the usual exordium, the senior judge * pronounced the sentence as follows :

“ For the re-publication of the North Briton, N^o 45, he should pay a fine of 500*l.*, and be imprisoned ten calendar months. And for publishing the Essay on Woman he should pay a fine of 500*l.* and be imprisoned twelve calendar months; to be computed from the expiration of the term of the former imprisonment. And that he afterwards should find security for good behaviour for seven years; himself in the sum of 1000*l.* and two sureties in 500*l.* each.”—He had already been imprisoned two months; so that the whole imprisonment made exactly two years. The severity of the sentence was universally condemned. Upon a candid review and consideration of the several circumstances of the case, all impartial people thought it cruel, malignant, and indefensible.

* Yates.

RIOT IN ST. GEORGE'S FIELDS.

FROM the time of Mr. Wilkes's commitment, a number of people daily assembled round the prison, to indulge the simple curiosity of seeing him at the windows. They always behaved very quietly, and were very orderly. But the ministry apprehending, or affecting to apprehend, that a contrary conduct might happen; they sent a guard of soldiers every day to protect the prison: and on the 17th of April, 1768, lord Weymouth, secretary of state, sent a very extraordinary letter to the magistrates, at the quarter sessions, at Lambeth. This letter some time afterwards fell into Mr. Wilkes's hands; and he published it, with some prefatory remarks.

The remarks, and the letter, the reader will find in the note *.

* To the Printer.

SIR,

I send you the following authentic state-paper,

On Tuesday, the 10th of May, the new parliament met, *pro formâ*. A number of

the date of which, prior, by more than three weeks, to the fatal 10th of May, shews how long the design had been planned before it was carried into execution.

(Copy.)

SIR,

St. James's, April 17, 1768.

Having already signified the king's pleasure, to the lord-lieutenant of the county in which you reside, with regard to the measures to be taken in general for preserving the peace, at a time that so very riotous a disposition has discovered itself among the common people, I make no doubt, but either some steps have, or will immediately be taken on that head; and, I take it for granted, that, as chairman of the sessions, you will meet the gentlemen, who act in the commission of the peace for the borough of Southwark, and East hundred of Brixton, to consult together, and fix upon some plan for securing the public tranquillity against any mischiefs which may happen, should the same indecent tumult and disorder which has appeared in the city and liberties of Westminster, spread itself to those parts, which are within the line of your duty; and,

the lower order of people entertained an opinion that Mr. Wilkes would go to the

though I am persuaded it is unnecessary to suggest to you, or the gentlemen who will meet you, any part of your duty upon such an occasion, yet, after the recent alarming instances of riot and confusion, I cannot help apprizing you that much will depend upon the preventive measures which you shall take, in conjunction with the other gentlemen in the commission of the peace, upon your meeting ; and much is expected from the vigilance and activity with which such measures will be carried into execution. When I inform you, that every possible precaution is taken to support the dignity of your office ; that, upon application from the civil magistrate, at the Tower, the Savoy, or the War-office, he will find a military force ready to march to his assistance, and to act according as he shall find it expedient and necessary ; I need not add, that if the public peace is not preserved, and if any riotous proceedings, which may happen, are not suppressed, the blame will, most probably, be imputed to a want of prudent and spirited conduct in the civil magistrates. As I have no reason to doubt your caution and discretion in not calling for troops till they

house of commons on that day to take his seat; and they assembled round the prison in greater numbers than usual, in order to see him go. When the soldiers came, who con-

are wanted; so, on the other hand, I hope you will not delay a moment calling for their aid, and making use of them, effectually, where there is occasion; that occasion always presents itself, when the civil power is trifled with and insulted; nor can a military force ever be employed to a more constitutional purpose, than in the support of the authority and dignity of magistracy.

I am, &c.

P. S. I have, for the greater caution, sent copies of this letter to the members for the borough, and Mr. Pownall. If you should have received no directions from lord Onslow for a meeting, you will consider this as sufficient authority for that purpose.

Daniel Ponton, esq. chairman
of the quarter-sessions at
Lambeth.

The prefatory remarks on this letter were made a fresh charge against Mr. Wilkes, and an additional ground for his expulsion.

sisted of a detachment from the third regiment of foot guards, commonly called the Scots regiment, they pushed the people away from the places where they were standing very quietly, in the most rude and brutal manner, and with the most vulgar language. The editor of this work was with Mr. Wilkes at the time. Some of the people, who had been thus driven and insulted, in a few minutes afterwards began to throw stones and gravel at the soldiers. Messrs. Ponton and Gillam, two magistrates, instantly appeared, and ordered the proclamation in the riot-act to be read. The people still hissed and hooted, and some of them threw stones; particularly a young man in a red waistcoat. His violent conduct provoked three of the soldiers, under the command of ensign Alexander Murray, to quit the rank in which they were stationed, in order to take him, or shoot him. The man fled, and the soldiers pursued. He took refuge

in a cow-house belonging to a Mr. Allen, a stable-keeper in Blackman-street in the Borough; and from thence he escaped. The soldiers entered the cow-house, and seeing a young man in a red waistcoat, they immediately shot him. This was an unfortunate circumstance; for the person whom they shot was not the right object. This sacrifice to revenge was no party in the riot*.

* This fact is stated in Dr. Free's funeral sermon on Allen's death. The doctor's words are these:

“The soldiers concerned in the murder of the deceased, by what authority I know not, were off their post, and pursuing another man across the road into a yard where there was a cow-house; the deceased, who had just parted from a conversation which he had with his mother, was going about his father's business; but seeing at that instant, from his father's house, the motion in the fields, went out into the high road before the house, to inform himself farther; when, observing the man pursued, and the soldiers following to go into the yard above mentioned, he went after them by another way, nearer his father's premises, to see the

When it was known that Allen was killed, the people assembled in greater numbers, and became more riotous and violent. The magistrates and military officers became no less intemperate on their part. Much firing followed; several persons were killed, and many were wounded. Mr. Wilkes wrote a pamphlet on the transactions of this disgraceful day, which he entitled "The Inhuman Massacre in St. George's Fields on the 10th of May, 1768." It was never published. He only gave a few copies to a few friends. It is too long to be inserted here, and contains some severe strictures.

event. By this time, the man, they had pursued, had made his escape, by shutting the door of the cow-house against the soldiers; who, coming in just as the deceased entered by another door, would not inform themselves who he was; but, with oaths, encouraged each other to shoot him upon the spot. Thus fell a valuable well-disposed young creature; the comfort of his parents, the delight of his friends, whose life and conversation were truly inoffensive."

Two of the soldiers who killed Allen, whose names were Donald Maclane and Donald Maclaury, were by the coroner's warrant committed to prison. But lord Mansfield bailed the latter, together with ensign Murray. Maclane, who was not bailed, was tried at the assizes at Guildford in August following, and was acquitted; another soldier, who had deserted, having confessed, in the hearing of justice Gillam and others, that he was the person who shot the man in the red waistcoat.

Mr. Wilkes was subpoenaed as a witness on this trial, but he was not examined. It seems to have been done with a view of giving him a day's excursion, more than any other motive. In one of his letters to his daughter he mentions it in these words :

Guildford, Aug. 8, 1768.

MY DEAR POLLY,

I SET out from the king's-bench this morning at five, in a post coach and four,

with the marshal and tipstaffs, accompanied by several other post chaises and coaches of our friends. We arrived here at nine. The grand jury met soon after. We were received with ringing of bells and general acclamations of the people. I have had a noble present of fruit, of which I have saved the pine apple for my dear girl. I am perfectly well. Adieu.

On the 11th of May, being the day after the riot, a very extraordinary letter was written by lord Barrington, secretary at war, to the field officer and staff of the guards; which Mr. Wilkes caused to be printed in all the newspapers, and which the reader will find in the note *.

* War-office, May 11, 1768.

Having this day had the honour of mentioning to the king, the behaviour of the detachments from the several battalions of foot guards, which have lately been employed in assisting the civil magistrates, and

No notice was taken of Mr. Wilkes in this short session of parliament, which ended on the 21st of June.

preserving the public peace; I have great pleasure in informing you, that his majesty highly approves of the conduct of both the officers and men; and means that his majesty's approbation should be communicated to them through you. Employing the troops on so disagreeable a service always gives me pain; but the circumstances of the times make it necessary. I am persuaded they see that necessity, and will continue, as they have done, to perform their duty with alacrity. I beg you will be pleased to assure them, that every possible regard shall be shewn to them; their zeal and good behaviour upon this occasion deserve it; and in case any disagreeable circumstance should happen in the execution of their duty, they shall have every defence and protection that the law can authorize, and this office can give.

I have the honour to be, sir,

your most obedient, and

most humble servant,

BARRINGTON.

To the field officer, and staff in
waiting, for the three regi-
ments of guards.

On the 1st of November 1768 he wrote a letter, which he called “A letter on the public conduct of Mr. Wilkes.” It was a recapitulation of the events already stated in this work.

When Mr. Wilkes was committed to the king’s-bench prison, he desired his daughter to quit Mrs. Mead’s house in Red Lion Court, Smithfield, and to reside in the house he had hired in Prince’s-court, Great George-street. The two following letters will shew his attention to her.

King’s-bench prison, Wednesday,
May 25, 1768.

DEAREST POLLY,

I wish you to write two short letters to mademoiselle La Vallerie, one to find her at Calais, the other at the Ship inn, Dover. If you will be so good to say how glad you shall be to see her, it will be very kindly taken, and I will regulate the rest, as to her post chaise, &c.

I will trouble you to thank Mrs. Mead in my name for all her care of and goodness to you. From yourself you will mention of course, that from time to time you intend yourself the honour of paying your duty to her and to the family, whether they are in country or town.

If you will bring the two letters to mademoiselle La Vallerie here on Friday, I will take care to seal and send them.

Mrs. Mead will of course understand that as you no longer make any part of her family after mademoiselle La Vallerie's arrival, you will take all your things to Prince's-court; and all the drawers, &c. below are for you; but you need not remove them all at once.

I hope in Prince's-court, as every where else, to give you every convenience, every elegance, every pleasure. I know your perfect prudence, and have an entire reliance on your good conduct, in all things. The more you have been tried,

the more I have found reason to approve and love you. I can safely trust you to be your own mistress ; and I have no scheme but what I know will please you. I am ever, my dear daughter,

your affectionate father,

JOHN WILKES.

MY DEAREST POLLY,

I WISH to-morrow before dinner was as convenient to my mother * as the afternoon, to favour me with your company here ; for the beef-steak gentlemen and lord Abingdon are to dine with me, and I believe will stay the afternoon, which will be too numerous a company of *be* creatures for you. If it is not equally convenient to you both, I shall still be glad to see you at the time fixed before.

* His own mother.

I beg my dear girl to buy a house-book, and to set down all expences, beginning from the first of her coming to Prince's-court. Monday will be a good day to settle the whole, and to pay the week's expences. One thing I insist on ; which is, that my dear daughter does not deny herself any pleasure of any kind she chooses, and let me know what it is, and I will contrive it. I will give you to-morrow what money you please ; and I never expend for myself with so much pleasure as for my dear girl.

I came to Mrs. Healey's, the 7th of February last. She is to have two guineas and a half per week. I have paid her 30 l. as you will see by her last receipt. To-morrow you may pay her the remainder. It is droll that the whole due when you pay her is just 45 guineas. I enclose you her receipt. I think she might contrive better for mademoiselle La Vallerie, considering what I give her a week ; but I fancy all this will end sooner than we ima-

gine here, and then we shall be at liberty
to pursue our former plan. I am ever,
my dearest daughter,

your affectionate father,

JOHN WILKES.

King's-bench prison, June 24, 1768, Friday.

Mr. Wilkes begs the favour of Mr. Almon to send him the —; and should be glad if Mr. Almon would call at the king's-bench, and bring with him the —.

Thursday, May 26, 1768.

Mr. Wilkes presents his compliments to Mr. Almon, and wishes to see him, and begs he will bring with him the manuscript of the History of the three P's.

King's-bench prison, Sunday, June 12, 1768 *.

* Mr. Almon visited Mr. Wilkes every Sunday morning, during the whole time of his confinement.

Mr. Wilkes's pecuniary circumstances being very limited, several of his friends resolved to open a subscription for his benefit. This was announced to the public by an advertisement, which the reader will find in the note *. The design, though

* Mr. Wilkes's friends undertook to receive subscriptions for satisfying his creditors, as some reparation to him, and justice due to them : his being now returned member of parliament for the county of Middlesex adds additional weight to their solicitude and application to the public.

Mr. Wilkes's cause being that of liberty and the constitution, with which the welfare of every Briton is inseparably connected, it is hoped the lovers of their country will testify their gratitude upon this occasion to their common benefactor; as it may be presumed he will make it the uniform ambition of his life to defend constitutional liberty.

It is therefore earnestly requested, that all who are friends to this cause, in which he has been so great a sufferer, and who are desirous he should be through life as independent in his circumstances as he is in his spirit, and are willing to promote this

very generous, was not very successful; but it laid the foundation of another subscription of considerable magnitude, under the direction of a society of gentlemen, who called themselves “supporters of the bill of rights;” of which an account will be given in its proper place.

generous design, will immediately send in their subscriptions, to enable the gentlemen who have undertaken this trust to perfect their generous endeavours.

No part of the monies subscribed under this trust has been, or ever will be, applied towards defraying any electioneering expences.

Subscriptions are taken in by John Mills, Samuel Vaughan, Richard Oliver, Lewis Mendez, and George Hayley, esqs. trustees; as also at Messrs. Lee and Ayton's, bankers, in Lombard-street; and at Mr. Almon's, in Piccadilly.

April 23, 1768.

MEASURES WHICH LED TO MR. WILKES'S
EXPULSION FROM THE HOUSE OF
COMMONS.

No attention having been given to the case of Mr. Wilkes in the late short session of parliament, he was resolved to force himself upon the notice of the house in the next; and therefore drew up a petition to the house, stating the principal points of his case, which he conceived to be illegal; and praying redress. A copy of this petition, taken from the Journals of the House of Commons *, the reader will see in the note †.

* Vol. xxxii. page 33.

† “ A petition of John Wilkes, esq. was presented to the house, and read; setting forth, that in April 1763, the petitioner, then a member of the house, was by a general warrant apprehended, and carried before the two secretaries of state; that he applied by his friends to the court of common-pleas for a *habeas-corpus*, which was ordered to issue immediately; of this he acquainted the said secretaries, at

A few days before the meeting of parliament, Mr. Wilkes published an address

his examination by them, who, notwithstanding, committed the petitioner close prisoner to the Tower, although charged only with a misdemeanor ; that, for three days, no person was suffered to have access to him ; that his house was plundered, his bureaux broke open, and his papers carried away, under the said general-warrant ; that, after his discharge from the Tower, by the unanimous judgment of the court of common-pleas, he was served with a *subpœna* from the court of king's-bench, upon an information ; that counter notices, signed ' summoning officer,' were sent to several of the jury only the day before the trials ; that, nevertheless, the trials came on the day fixed ; that the records were materially altered at lord Mansfield's house, by his lordship's orders, against the consent of the petitioner's solicitor, only the evening before the trials, without the knowledge of the petitioner, he being detained abroad by illness ; that the papers seized under the said general-warrant were produced as evidence on his trials ; that Philip Carteret Webb, esq. then solicitor to the treasury, suborned and bribed, with the public money, one Michael Curry, to give evidence against the petitioner at the trials, according to the directions of

to the freeholders of Middlesex ; in which he pledged himself to lay his whole case before the house of commons, in the form of a petition. He declared to all his friends, that he knew the ministry intended to expel him ; that the measure of his expulsion was a bargain made between the ministry and the court ; that it was upon

the said Mr. Webb ; that the petitioner was, in March last, elected knight of the shire for the county of Middlesex ; in April appeared before the court of king's-bench, when the said court committed him to the king's-bench prison ; and that, in June, he was sentenced to a farther imprisonment of twenty-two months in the said prison, where the petitioner now is ; and that the petitioner submits the whole of his case to the wisdom and justice of the house, in the full persuasion of having an effectual and speedy redress of all his grievances."

" Ordered to lie upon the table."

Those who wish to see the particulars of the proceedings of the house on, and in consequence of, this petition, may find them in the same volume of the Journals, pages 34, 58, 65, 68, 74, 79, 81, 82, 99, 150, 156, 170, 172, and 178.

the performance of this engagement, they held their places.

That there was such a report is very true, even from the time of his election; and it was very generally believed. Mr. Wilkes himself asserted, in his letter to the right hon. George Grenville, that the duke of Grafton held his power by the tenure of the expulsion of Mr. Wilkes. He therefore gave the report full credit and currency.

It is now necessary to state the real fact. The report never had any foundation in truth: The editor here speaks from his own knowledge. There was no engagement made, nor resolution taken, to expel Mr. Wilkes, till he presented his petition: On the contrary, it was the wish of the duke of Grafton, that Mr. Wilkes should take his seat, without any obstruction, at the end of his imprisonment; or perhaps sooner.

This fact is proved by the following circumstances. On Thursday the 10th of

November, Mr. Fitzherbert came to Mr. Almon with a message from the duke of Grafton, requesting him to inform Mr. Wilkes, that “if he would not present his petition, the duke assured him, upon his honour, no attempt should be made in parliament against him.” The duke foresaw that the petition would occasion great debates, which would distress government extremely. Mr. Almon said, he would carry the message; but he knew Mr. Wilkes would pay no regard to it. Nothing therefore can be more clear, than that at this time there was no engagement, or promise, to expel Mr. Wilkes; either by the ministers among themselves, or by the first minister with the closet. Mr. Almon brought no message from Mr. Wilkes; which increased the duke’s anxiety. His grace desired Mr. Fitzherbert to go to Mr. Wilkes, at the king’s-bench prison, to deliver the same message, and to enforce it in the strongest language. Mr. Fitzherbert took Mr. Garrick with him, because

he knew that Mr. Wilkes was not always correct in his reports of conversations. They went on the 13th of November.

Mr. Fitzherbert assured Mr. Wilkes, that if he would be quiet he might keep his seat ; but that, if he presented his intended petition, he would certainly lose it. He earnestly and ardently entreated Mr. Wilkes to lay aside his design. He declared that he made this assurance by the authority, and in the name, of the duke of Grafton ; and that he had his grace's unequivocal promise and engagement, upon his honour, that, if the petition was not presented, no attempt should be made in parliament against Mr. Wilkes. And he added, in confidence, he said, that some small submission to the king was all that would be expected, to accomplish, in a very short time, the remission of his fines, and his entire emancipation.

Mr. Wilkes replied, that he was always ready to make any submission to the king, because he never intended to offend him ;

but as to the petition, he thought it his duty to present it, and he would not alter his resolution.

It was a principal feature in Mr. Wilkes's character, that, when he had taken a resolution, he never changed it. But, what Mr. Fitzherbert had said concerning a submission to the king, Mr. Wilkes thought, gave him an opportunity to offer a petition to his majesty. He therefore drew up one, which the reader will see in the note *, and which was presented

* To the king's most excellent majesty.

The humble petition of John Wilkes
Sheweth,

That your petitioner, having stood forth in support of the constitutional rights of this kingdom, in opposition to a late violent administration, hath been severely prosecuted at law, and sentenced to pay a heavy fine, and suffer an imprisonment of twenty-two months; that the unfair methods employed to convict your petitioner have been palpable and manifest; that the petitioner has always been your majesty's loyal subject, zealously attached to your illustrious house, and will remain the same to the end of his life; that he looks up to the throne only for that

to the king by sir Joseph Mawbey at the levee ; but no notice was ever taken of it.

After many adjournments, the consideration of Mr. Wilkes's petition was fixed for the 27th of January, 1769. But the letter of lord Weymouth to Mr. Ponton, which has already been given under the head of "The Riot in St. George's Fields," with the prefatory remarks by Mr. Wilkes, having been published on the 8th of December, 1768 (which was subsequent to the presentment of Mr. Wilkes's petition), these remarks were complained of in the house of lords, and their lordships voted them to be a libel ; and the commons

protection and justice, which eminently distinguish your royal character ; that your petitioner, with the greatest deference, submits the whole of his case to your majesty's consideration, and humbly supplicates your royal clemency:

And your petitioner,
as in duty bound,
shall ever pray.

JOHN WILKES.

King's-bench prison,
Nov. 28, 1768.

adopted the same resolution. The ministry were now unanimous for the expulsion; and Mr. Wilkes's petition was declared frivolous.

On the 2d of February, 1769, Mr. Wilkes was brought to the bar; and, being asked what defence he could make concerning the prefatory remarks on lord Weymouth's letter, he answered as follows:

“ SIR,

“ I WAS the person who sent lord Weymouth's letter to the printer; and I do glory in confessing myself the author and publisher of the prefatory remarks. I thought it my duty to bring to light that bloody scroll. Were I permitted, I could bring such evidence as would induce this honourable house, not only to entertain the same sentiments on it with myself, but also to forward an impeachment on the noble lord who wrote it. I shall never deny what I look on as a meritorious action, and for which I ought to have your thanks.”

The House were now in possession of all the evidence they wanted.

Next day (February 3) lord Barrington moved, “ That John Wilkes, esq. a member of this house, who hath at the bar confessed himself to be the author and publisher of what this house has resolved to be an insolent, scandalous, and seditious libel; and who has been convicted, in the court of king’s-bench, of having printed and published a seditious libel, and three obscene and impious libels; and, by the judgment of the said court, has been sentenced to undergo twenty-two months imprisonment, and is now in execution under the said judgment, be expelled this house.”

The division on the motion was, for it 219, against it 136.

The arguments on this great question the reader will find in the parliamentary debates of this period.

It was in this debate that Mr. Pitt (afterwards earl of Chatham) styled Mr. Wilkes “ the blasphemer of his God, and “ the libeller of his king;” which so pro-

voked Mr. Wilkes, that he never forgave it, but kept a constant hostility with lord Chatham till his lordship's death.

The best defence of Mr. Wilkes on this occasion was the speech of the right hon. George Grenville; which met with universal approbation. However, Mr. Wilkes took exception to some passages in it, and wrote a severe and rude reply to those parts. This reply was intituled, "A Letter to the Right Hon. George Grenville, occasioned by his Publication of the Speech he made in the House of Commons," &c. Lord Temple, being informed of Mr. Wilkes's intention to write this letter, very earnestly and very ardently requested him to lay aside his design; but Mr. Wilkes peremptorily refused. The consequence was, a total annihilation of that friendship which had subsisted between them above twenty years: they never spoke to each other afterwards.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

